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Regeneration the Aim of the Gospel.

A SERMON*

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If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?—John iii: 12.

THIS question of the Lord follows, you observe, the questions which Nicodemus had asked, when the doctrine of the new birth was plainly and emphatically declared to him by the Master, and when he said in reply, "How can these things be?" The Lord has stated to him the necessity of this new birth, in order that one may see, or enter, the kingdom of God. He has affirmed the nature of it—a new life begun by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has given an image by which his hearer may be helped to understand the mode of operation of the Holy Spirit—an image caught from the wind, from the gentle and not the stormy wind, of which we feel the presence and force, which we hear in its rustle through the trees, which we see in its effect, curling the wave into crests of foam, but whose unseen source we cannot trace. Under this image the Saviour sets before the mind of Nicodemus the power and effect of the Holy Spirit in producing this newbirth in the human soul. The eminent Hebrew has evidently been surprised by the reception which he meets from the Lord. He has naturally felt that, coming as a ruler, probably a ruler distinguished for wealth, for a high character, possibly venerable by reason of age, he should receive a welcome from this young teacher in Israel that would correspond in its warmth of manifestation, in its fervent energy of cordiality, with his own distinguished rank and place among the people; and when he is confronted with this sharp, definite, repeated declaration, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, no man can see, no man can enter, the kingdom of God except he be born again,' there is a natural sur-

* Reported Phonographically by Geo. E. Miles

prise excited in his mind. Nor only that; there is a wholly new sphere of thought opened before him, which he has not before contemplated. He becomes aware of the alleged existence of experiences and powers with which his mind is utterly unfamiliar; and so he bursts into this exclamation or question—partly sincere, wholly incredulous—"How can these things be?"

It is as if you were to see the paper rolling out in its clearness, its whiteness, its firm texture, and to be told that it is composed of those filthy and fragmentary rags which you have just seen put behind the mechanism. 'How can it be'? It is as when you are shown the rough, earthy bulbs, and afterward the brilliant bed of tulips, and are told that all that color, all that symmetry and grace of figure and form have come from these unsightly bulbs. 'How can it be'? It is as when you are shown the magnificent lily of the Amazon, with its immense leaves, its fragrant white or rose-colored flowers, and are told that that prodigious and lovely growth has come from the small farinaceous seed which was first exhibited before you. 'How can these things be'? By what subtile mechanism, almost intelligent and prescient of results, is this white sheet unfolded from the rags? By what secret chemistry in air and earth, in sunshine and in shower, is the bed of tulips developed out of the bulb, or the magnificent Victoria lily out of the seed? 'How can these things be'? Explain the forces which are involved; show me the ingenious contrivances which are implied and necessary; open to me the secrets which lie behind the phenomena, that I may be better able to enter into, recognize, and feel the force of this amazing fact which you affirm.

So Nicodemus said: 'You speak of the new birth, the new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit, the new birth of the man when he is advanced in years. How can these things be? Open to me the secrets of this strange scheme. This is the result, you say. Show me how it is possible, with all the forces confederated in the Divine plan and will, for this amazing effect to be accomplished!' Partly a question; partly an exclamation; but plainly involving this appeal to the Master for a clearer discovery of the energies and engineries by which the result is brought to pass. And it is in answer to this that the Saviour says: "If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" 'I have told you of that which transpires in the world, here present; of that which is transacted in the experience of men, like yourself. I have given you an image of the power by which this effect is accomplished, caught from the wind that breathes at morning and at evening, at mid-day and at midnight, through the streets of Jerusalem, and over all the hills of Palestine. I have not told you of earthly things

like wealth, or like pleasure, like commerce, or like war. I have told you of these things which are spiritual in their nature and in their glory, but which still have their development on earth; and ye believe not. How can I explain to you, then, the secret and mighty forces above, belonging to the heavens, out of which come these transcendent effects? If you don't even believe the fact that the paper is unrolled from the rag, that the tulip is unfolded from the bulb, that the lily is developed out of the seed, how can I explain to you the forces by which this result is brought to pass?'

For observe how much there was involved in this question of Nicodemus—how much more than he himself could possibly have understood at the time.

It involved, at the outset, a discovery to him of that Divine holiness, which was something altogether different from what the Jew imagined it to be. He thought of it as a solemn vindictive justice toward the enemies of Israel; a favor toward the chosen people. It was something which set God apart, and separated Him from all mankind. That which was holy was that which was separated, by its very nature. It was austere, severe, judicial, forensic—this holiness of God—in *his* conception.

And, on the other hand, the true conception of that holiness recognized it as centered in perfect love, vitalized by an immortal, an unsearchable, tenderness of affection. It was a holiness that desired, with passionate and eternal longing, to communicate itself to others; a holiness only fully to be manifested to mankind in the humiliation, and suffering, and death of Him who came to reveal to the world not the mind only, or the power, but the inmost heart of the eternal Builder and Governor of all things. It was a holiness, therefore, which, by reason of the love which was in it, was the joy of heaven and the inspiration of its praise; was the hope and gladness of the spiritual universe, wherever it was recognized. And this holiness, out of which came the power and gift of the Holy Spirit, and into sympathy with which—into the reproduction of which within the human heart—it was the province of the Holy Spirit to lift the personal defiled soul of man, must be expounded to Nicodemus, before he could understand the mystery of the new birth.

So must the atonement of Christ, which was necessary as the condition of this gift of the Divine power, working this transcendent, celestial, and immortal effect. The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever looketh on Him with faith may live eternally. It was indispensable that God's justice be declared; that His wisdom be revealed; that His justice and His wisdom be shown in the self-sacrifice of His Son, in order that men might be brought out of defilement and condemnation into the freedom of God's sons and daughters—into the liberty and glory of this perfect love, producing perfect holiness within.

Not merely the atonement, but the pre-existence, the dignity, the glory, the divinity of the Son of God—only in consequence of which did it become possible for Him to make that atonement, to which no man was competent, which no angel could accomplish, which only God Himself, humbling Himself unto the earth, and taking human nature upon Him, could accomplish:—that must be manifested to Nicodemus before he could be answered in his question, How is it that these things can be?

So must the power of the Holy Spirit, and the personality of the Holy Spirit, be declared to him; for it is only by a moral and personal force that the moral and personal soul in man—in you and in me—can be affected permanently, essentially, for its immortal welfare. The wind, it is an image of the operation of this personal force of the Spirit of God, but it cannot take its place. The wind may shake the structures that we build, with its stormy and tempestuous energy, until they reel as the ship reels in the sea, and we are compelled to feel what terrific forces there are chained up in the air, which now and then may be let loose of God; but, however these may make our structures rock, and our souls rock, in timid harmony with the elemental confusion, they cannot work in us a new generosity, or patience, or love, or hope, or vision of Divine things. The earthquake, which shakes and shatters the solid globe beneath our feet, and makes us dizzy with the apprehension that the universe itself is being dissolved around us, it may make the soul stagger within; but it cannot, with all its terrific forces, inspire a new devoutness, a new charity toward one's fellow-men, a new understanding of the mysteries of the Divine word, a new and more tender love toward God. No force, however great, can do that, except it be a moral, personal force, quickening and appealing to the moral and personal spirit in us. So the personality of the Holy Ghost is necessary to be disclosed to Nicodemus, and explained to his mind, before the Lord can tell him how it is that the new birth is made possible in the Divine plan.

All that plan, in its eternal history, in its commencement in the mind of God before the worlds were, in its inspiration from His perfect love, in its modulation by His perfect wisdom, must be declared to the mind of this incredulous seeker after truth, if his question is to be fully answered. Yea, the celestial state above for which this change within is to prepare one—with its songs and its society, with its perfect circumstances, and its immortal and blessed experience,—must be unfolded to him; and the millennial glory of the world, when the reign of Christ shall have been perfected in it, and when every soul shall have experienced the new birth; when all shall dwell in perfect sympathy and perfect love toward each other and toward God, their work a worship, their joy a thanksgiving, and their ser-

vice, however difficult, a song—that must be declared as well to the mind of this man, in the darkness physical, and in the darkness moral, before his question can be answered.

Therefore you see why it is that the Lord replies as He does: 'If I have told you of the earthly things—the change in men's minds and spirits here, the wind by which the power working this change is illustrated to your thought—and ye believe not, even here where you can, as it were, touch the things I speak of, can see them, and feel them on every hand, how shall ye believe if I open to you these heavenly mysteries; these celestial plans; these divine energies; these transcendent ultimate effects, on the earth and in the heaven? How can ye believe if I tell you of these heavenly things?' It was a natural, it was a divine, it was an inevitable answer; and it suggests to us certain trains of thought which we may ponder for a little.

The first is, that Regeneration is the key-word to the Gospel. Men sometimes speak of the Gospel as if it were intended simply to bring to us the discovery of God, a clearer and higher manifestation of Him than had been made in nature. That is its office in part; and yet the thought of God has been in the human soul from the beginning of history, from the beginning of personal experience on the earth; and he who has felt the powers of nature working around, and seen the great arch of stars above him in the night, has had a sense—vague, perhaps, yet powerful—of an unseen personal force, pervading, governing, energizing all; an apprehension of God, that has come out in the time of his peril, that has come out most clearly as the hour of death drew near. The stubbornest infidel, on the deck of the ship about to sink, bends his reluctant knee, and breaks into prayer to this Supreme Power which is overhead. The Gospel, therefore, does not make manifest to man the reality of God, although it throws a new, more beautiful and surpassing light upon His character, His wisdom, and His purposes of grace.

It does not come to declare to men their own sinfulness. Christ came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Consciousness of sin has been in the human heart as long as any human heart has existed on the earth, this side the gates of Paradise; and out of this has come the offering even of human sacrifice that God might be propitiated. Out of this has come blighting despair, bitter remorse, when there has been no way found, by the most anxious spirit in its most anxious quest, in which it could be harmonized again with the God from whom it had departed. You do not need to go to the Scripture to learn of sin. You see it in all pages of human history; traced in lines so lurid that no light from the Divine Word can surpass it. You hear it in the moan which arises from human society, all whose voices in the upper air—whatever the sounds of gayety or

of enterprise may be beneath—commingle on the minor key. There is a sound of wailing in history, and in society, which represents the presence, and the recognition of the presence, of this element of sin. Every human heart feels it in itself. When it contemplates eternity, under the light thereof this hidden writing comes flashing into exhibition; and the man knows himself weak, knows himself in all his weakness a rebel and a sinner against the Most High.

No: what the Gospel comes to do is neither so much to teach us concerning God, though it illustrates His character, nor concerning sin, though it illustrates the character of it, the evil effect of it, the condemnation of it; but what it comes to do is to show how the sinner may be harmonized again, sympathetically harmonized, in the spirit of his mind and heart, with the eternal God, against whom he has offended. The new birth is therefore the burden, and the lesson, and the promise of the Gospel. Not education. Education of the intellectual forces is important in its place, important in its relations; but it is subordinate to this—the regeneration, by the inward energy of the Holy Spirit. Not ethical teaching, so that a right exterior life may be fashioned by the power of the Gospel. That, as well, is important in its place; but the Gospel contemplates a man's becoming right before doing right, contemplates his being holy in heart before he ean be holy in conduct.

More radical is the aim of the Gospel in its operation upon man: to bring him into harmony through the new birth with the spirit of the Most High. Not even civilization is the word which unlocks to us the meaning of the Scripture; although wherever the Gospel goes, thither civilization goes in its train. It scatters the emoluments, the industries, and the arts of civilization around its path as the prince may scatter the diamonds and pearls from his royal robe. These inventions which multiply power, which multiply wealth, which span the spaces of earth and contract them, which curb and conquer the seas, which make the winds and the lightnings the messengers of man—they are a fruit of the Gospel, but they are not the end of the Gospel. The Hindoo says: "Your wire speaks in the air, while ours is silent; your black stones burn, and ours had no such virtue in them until you taught us; your iron swims, while ours sinks; therefore, the Gospel is the Book of God." There is a subordinate and incidental argument for the divinity of the Gospel in its effect upon civilization; but that is not the purpose, prime, paramount, supreme, for which it comes into the world. Nor does it come for the advancement of social order or civil liberty, important as these are in their places. Nor does it come to give men salvation, independently of this new birth of the soul. There is no such detestable antinomianism in the Gospel. It does not offer a man eternal life on the condition that he

will do certain outward acts, or entertain certain intellectual convictions, that he will form his life according to the law of certain practices and rituals. It offers him salvation, as the outgrowth of regeneration; as the development, into the perfect fruit and flower, of that germ which is implanted of spiritual and Divine life when the new birth takes place within him. But there is no salvation possible, according to the Gospel, to any man in whom this radical, spiritual change, by the power of the Holy Ghost, has not been accomplished. If you were to crowd such a man through the gates of pearl, the crystal pavement would be darkened by the shadow of his selfishness. Heaven itself would blast him into blindness with its celestial splendors encircling and surrounding him. There is no salvation for any man, except as the new birth precedes it, and is the germ of it; and so that new birth—regeneration by the Holy Spirit—is the key-word of this book of truth and life.

It is thus transcendent in its aim. Where is there a philosophy which contemplates an ideal like this? Where has there been any most elaborate system of ethics, or of ritual, except where they have been formed by the Gospel, that has contemplated so amazing a change for man? Take the child and train him; take the community and equip it, arm its hand and enlighten its eyes, by telescope and microscope; give it new faculty for transmitting thought; give it new power over the energies of nature—*that* is the aim of civilization, the aim of statesmanship, the aim of philosophy. But the Gospel proposes this radical, spiritual, immortal change within the man, whereby not only his sins are forgiven for the past, but he is started anew, to begin his moral life again, with his past experiences for his warning, with God's promise of the future for his inspiration. This new birth, by which the soul is harmonized with God, and man in his feebleness and the fewness of his years upon the earth is made sympathetic with Him who has the eternal years, and before whose creative will the universe has risen as a temple in the spaces—this is the aim of the Gospel.

Transcendent, therefore, it is in its purpose and idea; and, of course, unique in its energies it must be, to accomplish an end like this. It must surpass all human expectation, if human expectation is governed by any lower end than that toward which the Gospel points. It must surpass, in miracle and wonder, in mystery of power and mystery of wisdom, all that poet has sung, all that philosophy has conceived, if it is to accomplish a result which poetry, unillumined by it, has never anticipated, and which philosophy has never conceived. Regeneration, alone, is the key-word of the Gospel, opening its aims to us, interpreting the mighty compact of its wonders!

Then observe, further, what follows of course, that he who most distinctly apprehends and understands this new birth—

having not merely discerned it intellectually, having experienced it spiritually—will best understand and interpret the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not intellectual equipment, or intellectual practice, that can prepare him for such a comprehensive intuition of the Gospel. It is not conference with other minds, training his to proper views, giving him freshness of faculty, a fine stimulation of each power. It is not travel in distant lands, with the observation of geographical or social phenomena which exist there to-day as they did aforetime, which is to qualify a man to be an interpreter of the Gospel, to apprehend its mysteries, and to speak them to others. What he needs for this is a spirit born of the Holy Spirit, into harmony with God. Then the mystery becomes, not intelligible, since the human faculty cannot comprehend the Divine thought, but it becomes probable beforehand, and is easily accepted by the renewed, illuminated mind. As St. Bernard says, nobly and sweetly: "The same things which are within us by the subtlety of their spiritual nature, are also above us, by the sublimity of their essence and their being"; and he who has these things within him here, upon the earth, will understand those things above him, filling the heavens, as no one else possibly can. He will know what sin is, more than the moralist or the historian, because he has felt within himself how powerless he was against its forces and vicious tendencies, until the energy of the Holy Ghost came, stimulating him, and coöperating with his effort to overcome the evil power. He has seen what God is, in His affectionate holiness, His loving justice, His perfect immortal splendor of purity. He has seen the interior life of God, as no scientist can who observes merely the works of nature.

What can you tell of the character of the engineer whose ingenuity has driven the drill through mountain-rock, until he has hollowed there a passage, for the trains of travel and of commerce to sweep through, from land to land? You know his foresight of difficulty, his superb skill; you know the energy with which he arranges mechanisms to master difficulty. Do you know whether he is generous, or not? chaste, or not? truthful, or not? humane, or not? devout, or not? What can you tell of the man who has fashioned for you the watch, in respect to that which is essential and supreme in every man, his spiritual character, his moral relation to God, the Most High? What can you tell of the temper of the architect, from his constructions? What can you tell, even, of the heroism of the historian from the narrative which he gives of great events, and the characters he portrays? How much can you tell of the spirit of God from these physical structures round about us? I can find His wisdom in the balancing of the stars. I find His constructive skill in the arrangement and interlocking of ter-

restrial forces. I can find His love of beauty declared, not merely in the vase of the lily, in the lining of the shell, in the sunset-fires, but in the mosses and lichens, in the grain of the wood hidden in the centre of the trunk of the tree. I can find here His love of beauty; but I do not find His holiness manifested, in its tenderness, in its eternal and spotless glory of perfect righteousness. This is never radiantly declared, on every side, until there is in me something sympathetic with it, wrought by the Holy Spirit.

Then I know God, and am no more an orphan in the universe. I am allied filially to Him; and the universe is illuminated and glorified. It becomes to me what the body of Christ became to the disciples on the Mount, in the darkness of the night—luminous with the radiance flashing from itself, the very travel-worn robes, the mud-stained garments, so brilliant with celestial light that they scattered the dark before them. The universe becomes luminous with the light of God's character when once the new birth has interpreted that character.

One understands then why Christ came; not to be a teacher merely, though a teacher grandly; nor mainly as an example. Indeed, how is Christ an example to us? In this sense He is: He represents to us the perfect ideal toward which we are to stagger and to struggle, forward and upward. But He does not show the staggering step by which we are to reach it. He does not show the stiff and stubborn striving against nature by which you and I are to climb to those heights, to dwell on which to Him was native.

We speak loosely of Christ as our example, and in this sense He is: He reveals to us the utmost spiritual attainment of a Divine nature, coming into the humiliation of an alliance with human nature. But he does not show us, as Paul did, how we ought to work to overcome the taints that are in us as they were in Paul. He does not show us, as Peter did, what the virtue of repentance is, when bitter tears burst from the eyes by reason of it. He does not show us, as John did, what a man like ourselves may become, when, after his impassioned and impetuous youth, the passion becomes merged in a perfect love toward Christ, and the impetuosity aspires into the flight of the eagle toward the heavens! He did not come, solely or principally, to be our teacher, or our example; and in His death He was no example for us. He died voluntarily, and we have no right to. He died in an agony unspeakable; and it is the Christian's privilege to die in a joyful hope, and a triumphant expectation. He was not our example, except in this sense of revealing to us the ideal holiness, in His life and in His death! But he came to be more than teacher, more than example—the Mediator between us and God—communicating this Divine life to our hearts; the Head of a regenerated people in the world; the King and Lord of a

regenerate race. And he who has felt in his own heart the power of this regeneration knows what Christ came for, knows who Christ is.

He knows the power of the Holy Spirit. He knows the nature of repentance: which is not merely regretting the past and determining to do better in future, but an inward recoil of the soul against that which it has preferred, in its new allegiance to Him who is the Holiest of the holy. He knows the nature of faith: which is not an intellectual assent to certain propositions; which is the cleaving of the heart, in all the fullness of its love, in all the grandeur of its self-consecration, unto Him who is Lord and King in heaven and in earth. He who has experienced the new birth has all these facts and wonders interpreted to his soul; and so he stands at the centre, from which all the lines diverge. He stands at the point from which the landscape opens; and sometimes the converted ruffian becomes thus, naturally, the most effective teacher, as well as the most discerning scholar, of the Gospel. The Magdalen knows more than the Pharisee. The devout soul is wiser than the wisest of skeptical philosophers.

And so you observe, still further, where is the cause and where the cure of skepticism in the world. The cause is in the misapprehension of the purpose, and therefore of the nature and method, of the Gospel of Christ. It is regarded as intended to educate men, to civilize them, to set them forward in civil liberty and social enjoyment, and in public order, as if this were its principal, governing, paramount purpose. It therefore seems too great, its miracles too wonderful. Men say it is fantastic, incredible, because they are looking at it with reference only to these lower ends. All skepticism, which is honest, has its foundation in such a misconception of the Gospel. It interprets that Gospel, and criticises it, as one would criticise the cathedral as not being fitted to the purposes of a barrack; or as one would criticise a steamship as not being suitable for the uses of a gallery of art. No! The purpose of the cathedral is to be a temple, an incorporate and majestic music in the air. The purpose of the steamship is to conquer the seas, and bring distant lands into neighborhood. Interpret either with reference to its design, and you may properly criticise it if there is opportunity for it. Interpret the Gospel according to its design. See how all its forces bear upon this regeneration of the heart, this imparting of a new, Divine, spiritual life to the sinful and doomed soul of man, and then its harmonies appear, its construction explicates itself. It is its own triumphant vindication. That skepticism which simply rejects the Gospel as a spiritual system, and puts in place of it a hierarchy and physical sacraments—sacraments communicating a Divine grace—has its foundation, also, in an incorrect and false idea of the nature of regeneration. All skepticism, so far as it is intelli-

gent and honest, not merely willful and malignant, bases itself upon a misconception of this Divine life in the human soul. When that has been dispelled by experience, then, suddenly, the skepticism disappears.

Men say sometimes: "It is absurd to suppose that that man's convictions will continue. He has been an infidel all his life. No man can be so suddenly changed in his mind as he has been, and the change prove a permanent one." Why not? You wander up the hill-side, through the forests, up by the side of streams and under the shadow of trees, and see nothing on either hand, until at last, with one step, you are upon the summit, and the landscape opens on either side. Church-spire and village, homestead and farm, the broad meadow, the mighty trees, the river winding through, and the distant hills—the whole landscape is before you at a flash. Many a man has been toiling on in ways of sin, darkness, and unbelief, until he at last came to the experience—he himself knowing not how—of the new birth, by the power of the Holy Spirit; and all the great plans of God, all the vast charm of the Gospel, were opened to his mind in a flash, as the landscape opens before your eye. And all the more certain is it, on account of its suddenness, to continue. Skepticism disappears, because he understands what the Gospel came to do for him, what the Son of God and the Spirit have come to accomplish.

Then he understands what the heavenly blessedness is. It is this spirit allied to God's, harmonized with His, surrounded by such setting and circumstances as He in His omnipotence can give. You do not wear your precious diamond in a ring of wood. You do not set your most prized ornament, which came from ancestors now passed into the heavens, in a casket of pebbles or of pine. But you set your diamond in gold; you set your lovely and prized heirloom in velvet and in oak. And God sets His beloved ones in circumstances that are responsive to His love, that are illustrative of that love: and that is Heaven. You show me God's work in the human heart, bringing it to this new birth, and these new and blessed relations to Himself, and then you may blot out every promise! I do not want them. I know that the gold and the crystal cannot equal the splendor of that Divine abode. I know that around that throne are the gold, the ruby, the jasper, the chrysolite, and the amethyst. Yes, if John had never seen them, I should know that they were there, in the City of God, where He gathers up His jewels, and His elect are with Himself!

Thus, my friends, all skepticism disappears with the experience of this new birth, interpreting the Gospel; and thus you see the perfection of the knowledge which will be ours by and by, if we have experienced this. Expansion of power—undoubtedly that shall have something to do with our perfect knowledge. There are powers in each of us greater than we know, our-

selves. Put a man in an emergency—how inventive he is. Put a woman in sudden peril—how she stands unperturbed, full of courage, and full of expedient. There are powers in us that may break by and by into the richness of rhythm, when we go up yonder; into the splendor of philosophic intuition, when we stand on high; powers suddenly to be unfolded, in new circumstances, as we pass into the presence of God, under the smile of His Son, under the infinite penetration of the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But, after all, lay that aside, and think that there the soul shall be perfected in this new life, which began in its new birth; and, being in sympathy with God, shall share His intuition of the Universe! There is perfect knowledge. Not that there shall not be mysteries, still, beyond those which now we think of—mysteries still to unfold this power of faith in us; for that is to be an element of immortal progress with each of us. There shall be mysteries, on which our faith must be fastened. But these things that now seem mysterious shall be perfectly opened to our exalted and illumined minds; and we shall see face to face, no more as through a glass darkly, when the soul is perfect in God's holiness.

Now, my friends, you look upon the acorn, and wonder at the final oak. You look upon the tiny egg, so fragile and small, and wonder, by and by, at the eagle soaring above the clouds, breasting the tempest, riding over the hurricane, seeking the sun! You look into this spirit of man, in which is the new birth, in which is the infant soul just converted into Christ, and it seems a slight thing; but all the vision and the ecstasy of heaven, all the immortal experience, all the unsearchable glory, are folded in that tiny experience of love. And if we have known this earthly thing—this birth by the power of the Holy Ghost—then we shall know, by and by—for Christ Himself will teach them to us as He could not to Nicodemus—all the wonder and the mystery of those heavenly things which are here prophesied, and there fulfilled. God bring us to it, in His great grace, in His own time; and unto Him be all the praise!

The Gospel for all Nations.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, LONDON, ENGLAND, APRIL 30, 1877, BEFORE THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY, BY THE Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Durham.

Lord of all power and might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion. Let Thy continual pity cleanse and defend Thy Church. Preserve it evermore in the true faith. Be merciful to it, and bless it, and cause Thy face to shine upon it, that so it may hold forth the Word of life to all nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.—Ezekiel xlvii: 12.

FROM the fall onward through nearly 4,000 years was the Almighty graciously pleased to reveal, from time to time, to His faithful servants glimpses of that tender love toward mankind which had been proposed in the counsels of the Triune Jehovah before the foundation of the world. And often in the darkest periods of His Church's history, when it seemed on the verge of perishing through the assaults of external foes, or through its own lukewarmness or unfaithfulness, did God vouchsafe, by the mouth of His holy prophets, the brightest and most cheering revelations of future grace and glory, in order that He might confirm the faith and renew the strength of those who, amidst previous discouragement and difficulty, waited upon the Lord. Of this character is the scene presented before the eyes of Ezekiel by the Holy Spirit, of which my text forms the conclusion, and which is well described in the heading of the chapter as the "Vision of the holy waters and the virtue of them."

The prophet, although a captive in a heathen land, is brought in the visions of God to the land of Israel, and beholds, issuing from the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High in Jerusalem, a little rill of water, narrow and shallow. But as, by direction of his heavenly guide, he follows the course of this stream, and passes time after time through its waters, he finds after a thousand cubits that the waters are to the ankles; and after another thousand cubits, the waters reach to the knees; and again, a little space, and the waters were to the loins; and at the last measurement the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. Now, while commentators have varied in their interpretation of some of the minor details of the vision, none, I believe, have disputed that this gradual increase of the stream

issuing from the sanctuary, from the Holy of Holies, is a vivid representation of the progress of the waters of eternal life, which, deriving their source from the hidden counsels of mercy and wisdom of the Triune Jehovah, at first presented, as they gushed forth from the cross of the despised Galilean, an appearance so humble as to be most distasteful to the pride and foolishness of man, but yet did rapidly and irresistibly overspread nation after nation, and shall continue to flow on with increasing might, until the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

Nor are the inestimable benefits which the Gospel conveys to a ruined world less forcibly portrayed. "These waters," says the prophet, "go down into the desert, and go into the sea." "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." It traverses the desert, and its barren sands are overspread with verdant and fruitful trees. It flows onward to the sea whose bitter waters had destroyed all life, and the poisonous waters are at once healed, and teem with a great multitude of fish. The influence also of these typical waters is as permanent and extensive as it is beneficial; for it is written: "By the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." Such, too, have ever been the blessed results of the everlasting Gospel of the grace of God. Whenever the waters have indeed issued from the sanctuary, whenever the pure Word of God has been preached, the Holy Ghost has accompanied that Word with His soul-regenerating power. The poisonous and dead sea of the world has been healed of its destructive influence. Its inhabitants, with no spiritual life in them, but dead in trespasses and sins, have been quickened by divine grace. The barren desert of this earthly existence, which sin has made desolate by its withering blasts of sickness, and disappointment, and separation, and death, is gladdened through the Gospel of life and immortality with resignation, patience, peace, hope, joy in believing, and all the varied fruits of the Spirit. Nor are these life-giving blessings of the Gospel exhausted or diminished by the lapse of time. They are trees whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: but as months, and years, and ages pass, they shall still continue to yield new fruit. The Gospel of Christ is like Him who brought it down from heaven to man; the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. The revolutions of nations have only manifested that the kingdom of Christ is one that cannot be shaken. The lapse of ages has

only accumulated fresh evidence that the waters of life are inexhaustible. The discovery of new lands and people has added fresh trophies to the power of the cross, and proves that wherever human beings are found, however differing from ourselves in habits and knowledge, the Gospel is needed, is adapted, is intended for those human beings. The tree of life still continues to flourish and expand. No efforts of godless men or evil spirits have been able to uproot it. No devices of subtle enemies or false friends have succeeded in poisoning its fruits o rcontracting its shade. Still does it stand forth, the tree of God's own planting, in the midst of a suffering, perishing world ; offering health to the sick, and food to the hungry, and shelter to the weary. To the end of time the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Let me remind you a little more in detail of some of the important truths implied in my text.

First, it sets forth the Gospel of Christ as the one only remedy for man's spiritual diseases. "The leaf thereof for medicine," or, as we find it translated in the margin of our Bibles, "for bruises and sores." The prevalence of disease throughout the world, the various forms in which it presents itself, the countless train of sufferings which attend it, and the death to which it finally and irresistibly pursues its victims, all present so true and lively a picture of the extent and consequences of sin, that the illustration is often employed in Scripture to represent the perilous condition of man as a sinner in God's sight. Sin is the soul's loathsome malady. It may manifest itself differently in different individuals. It may be moderated in its external symptoms by a variety in disposition, or education, or opportunities. But still it is universal in its influence. It has formed part of our moral nature from the first moment of our existence, for, as by one man sin entered into the world, so hath the corruption of Adam's nature been transmitted to all his posterity. And this leprous birth-spot has grown with our growth, and tainted thought, word and deed. And whither can we flee for aid? The sinner cannot find it in his own efforts and fancied merits. It costs more to redeem a soul, or to heal a wounded spirit. Men, indeed, have in every age since the Gospel was revealed, and not least in these days of advanced science and philosophy, falsely so called, endeavored to deny the extent and even the existence of the disease, or to invent some remedy less humiliating to the pride of the human heart. But the anxious inquirer finds all these to be but profane and vain babblings. They fail to bring relief to the sin-smitten sufferer. For such there is but one physician, but one medicine—Christ Jesus the Lord; who giveth His own blood to be the healing balm, and who applieth His perfect righteousness and all-prevailing in-

tercession as the never-failing remedy for every form of the soul's disease, though its virulent plague-spots be red like crimson, and the sufferer be on the very verge of death. "For if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." And, thanks to God, you, my Reverend brethren, in many and many an instance have found the promise to be true. You have witnessed again and again how the hungering, perishing soul has fed on the leaf of the tree of life and found it to be for medicine. You have gone to the bedside of the dying child of God. He may have been one whose earthly lot has been that of destitution, sorrow and pain. He will, he *must* be one, if truly quickened by the Holy Spirit, who has learned much of the exceeding breadth and spirituality of God's law, and who is conscious that his own sins are grievous, their burden intolerable. Yet, as you have listened to his utterances, full of peace and joy in believing, your own faith in the power of the Gospel has been strengthened, and you have been encouraged to go on, determined to know nothing, to teach nothing among your people but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, as you have heard him in response to your instructions say: "Yes, my sins are more in number than the hairs of my head; none can tell how oft I have offended; how often I have broken that perfect law given me for my rule; how often I have lightly esteemed that precious blood whereby I was redeemed; how often I have grieved that Holy Spirit who has striven with me; how often I have preferred this corruptible body and transitory world to my soul's salvation and an eternal inheritance of glory! Yet, though my sins be countless as the sands, my soul can magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in God my Saviour. My spiritual leprosy, however loathsome and deadly, has met with a remedy all-sufficient. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. It is *God* that justifieth. It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again. This tree of life healeth all my diseases: and in every doubt of unbelief and assault of Satan I flee to it for shelter, and find its leaf to be for medicine." And does this blood-bought remedy lose its virtue when carried from our favored country to distant lands? Oh, no! the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. Its blessed effects are everywhere the same, because the disease is everywhere the same; and wherever sin abounds, grace doth much more abound. The unhappy heathen mother, whose heart was once torn by the conflict between parental affection and anxiety for her own salvation, and who had been taught that her only escape from endless misery was to sacrifice the fruit of her body for the sin of her soul, now can clasp to her bosom the babe she fondly

loves, for she has learnt that Jesus Christ is the one propitiation for sin, and has presented to Him the sacrifice of a contrite, grateful heart. The miserable Indian faquir who has spent years in self-torture, with the vain hope of atoning for his sins, and yet never could get rid of the harrassing fear that he had not done enough to deserve heaven, now listens with overflowing heart to the Gospel of free grace, and rejoices in the liberty wherewith Christ has set him free. The degraded African whose only idea of the Deity had been that of an *Evil Spirit*, and who hated whilst he feared the god whom he worshiped, now has heard the welcome tidings that God is love, and no longer shudders at the prospect of entering into God's presence, since, through the light of the Gospel, his terror is exchanged for hope. Surely, brethren, by the power which the doctrine of Christ crucified has of supplying all the spiritual necessities of the whole human race, and by all the blessed results which have attended its partial propagation, should we deem it our plain duty and most honorable privilege to endeavor to plant in the most distant portions of a suffering, dying world, that tree of life whose leaf shall be for medicine.

But, further, my text states that the fruit shall be for meat. Christ, as the bread of life, is the food which nourishes and strengthens the soul, and enables it to grow in holiness. And hence evangelical doctrine is the one adequate motive to enable man to contend successfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is not the popular opinion of the day, which would decry all dogmatic teaching as old-fashioned and unsuited to this age of development, and which expects that it can regenerate corrupt human nature by disquisitions on morality and the duties of social life. Most vain hope! most idle dream! which thinks to rear the superstructure when it is undermining the foundation; which imagines it shall reap the ripened fruit, when its unwise efforts have been directed to uprooting the tree. We question not, indeed, that much may be effected in the improvement of mankind by inferior agents and motives. Many evil habits may be renounced from motives of self-interest. Many good resolutions may be persevered in through the energy of the natural character. But it is the cross of Christ alone which can prevail upon men not merely to crucify one fleshly passion, but the flesh itself, with all its vile affections and lusts. It is the doctrine of the Gospel, when engrafted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, which enables the sinner not only to amend his life in one or two points, but to abound in all the fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of God. And hence it is that we find the Apostles, in their preaching and writings, holding forth dogmatic truth, or, in other words, the simple Gospel, the old, old story, as the power of God unto salvation—the one lever mighty enough to

raise man's earth-bound heart and life into an atmosphere of purity and holiness. And what is true of individuals is true also of nations. The tree of Divine truth is the only tree where fruit can be for meat to satisfy the craving after a higher moral condition, which still can be traced in fallen man, despite his universal degradation. True it is, we allow, that many national blessings may be enjoyed independently of Christianity. A love of liberty, a spirit of patriotism, a high tone of civilization and of intellectual refinement—all these fruits may grow on the tree of unsanctified human energy. But we have only to turn to the history of heathen Greece or Rome in ancient times, or to that of heathen China or India in modern days, to learn how sensuality and selfishness and cruelty reign undisturbed in every nation, however civilized, when the true God is not present; while our increasing information respecting the manners and practices of heathen peoples gives an unvarying contradiction to the often-repeated and as often-refuted objection to missionary effort, viz., that it is better to leave the heathen undisturbed to their ancient creeds, which are more suitable to their national character, and which inculcate all such duties as are needful for them to know. Nor has the time passed away when such assertions are still made and credited, although they have been disproved by fact upon fact; and public documents and the researches of individual travelers have alike testified that language can scarcely be too strong when it is used in describing the excess of impurity, treachery, and violation of every social and domestic duty which receives sanction from the traditionary lives of the false gods whom the heathen worship. But when Christianity has gained admittance, the change has been as great as beneficial. The cannibal tribes of the South Sea Islands, with whom it had been the chief occupation and interest of life to make war on each other, and avenge, in the blood of their enemies, the wrong done to their ancestors, are now united in the bonds of Christian brotherhood, and seek to emulate each other in acts of forgiveness and charity. The wild aborigines of America, whom civilization, after having cruelly expelled them from their homes, shamelessly proclaimed as beyond the reach of improvement, and maintained that the red man must pine and perish before the white man, have now been won by the preaching of the Gospel to lay aside their wandering and dissolute habits, and in Christian villages to acquire habits of industry, and a taste for the comforts of domestic life. The wretched negro, whom the cupidity and lust of his fellow-man had degraded to the lowest stage of humanity, now, under the influence of Christianity, has been freed from the shackles which enchained mind and body, and proves himself the equal of the European in intelligence and energy. And far more than all this, inasmuch

as its results shall endure when time shall be no more, these tribes and people are walking in the paths of faith and holiness. The Gospel, which has improved their earthly prospects, has revealed to them the assurance of life eternal; and if this tree of life has been to them a shadow from the heat of temporal distresses, much more to their souls the fruit thereof hath been for meat, and the leaf therof for medicine.

Again, we learn from the text and its context that the law of the kingdom of grace, like that of nature, is one of constant progress and increase. The little rill deepens and widens into the mighty river; the grain of mustard seed becomes a great tree; the leaven, so small as to be hidden in the surrounding mass, yet leavens the whole lump. True it is that it is not for human foresight to fix the time and manner and measure of this increase. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The conversion of nations, as of individuals, is the prerogative of God the Holy Ghost, and His ways are not as our ways; He works according to His good pleasure, as the wind bloweth where it listeth. Hence in the context it is not the prophet, but the heaven-sent messenger who comes to instruct the inspired penman, who, with the line in his hand, marks out the various stages of the on-flow of the waters of the sanctuary. To human judgment the means may appear inadequate, the signs obscure, which indicate the progress of Christ's kingdom; and the believer is sometimes tempted to cry out with the unbeliever, "Where is the promise of His coming?" But each year, each age, each Church is accomplishing the task assigned to it in the secret counsels of Him with whom a thousand years are as one day, and who, at the set time, can make the feeblest instruments the irresistible agents in bringing to pass His purpose of mercy. Some commentators have thought that, in this prophecy of Ezekiel, in the flowing of the holy waters toward the East, and the healing of the bitter waters of the Dead Sea, was set forth the future conversion of the Jews, that through them the whole world may be evangelized; so that to the seer was vouchsafed dimly in a vision a glimpse of that glorious prospect which the Apostle foretells in unambiguous language, when the re-engrafting of Israel into the Church of Christ will be as life from the dead to the Gentile world; and that when God remembers His holy promise and Abraham His servant, Zion shall lift up her voice with strength to proclaim to the uttermost parts of the earth, with unparalleled success, the glad tidings of salvation. But whether this interpretation of some expressions in the context be correct or no, the general meaning of the passage is unquestioned, as predicting that of the increase of Christ's kingdom and government there shall be no end. "Living waters," writes the prophet Zechariah (xiv. 8), re-echoing

the teaching of my text, and of so many other like prophecies, "Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and winter shall it be: and the Lord shall be king over all the earth." In every direction, in every clime, shall the waters of life spread; the summer's drought shall not exhaust their abundance, the winter's frost shall not check their progress, until the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Hab. ii. 14). And if God's gracious purpose be so distinctly revealed, then man's duty is as plainly taught. For, inasmuch as it is the rule of the Divine government to work His ways upon earth by human instrumentality, and every promise of blessing from on high implies that man shall be the channel through whom that blessing shall be conveyed, it necessarily follows that the moment we are assured that it is God's will that the heathen should be His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession, we must receive it as a command which may not be forgotten, which must not be neglected, to tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

There is but one objection of any weight which can be urged to justify a want of interest in the missionary cause. It is that the spiritual destitution nearer home is so vast, the claims of our own ignorant and degraded countrymen for Gospel privileges so urgent, as to absorb all that we can offer of money or effort. When we read a statement made this year on good authority (*Home Mission Field* for January, 1877), that the population of England is increasing annually at the rate of considerably more than a quarter of a million, and that there are now some five millions of souls without the means of grace, even when every allowance has been made for the labors of those who are not of our communion, the painful question naturally presents itself, Is it right to seek out the distant desert of heathendom, when the moral wilderness at home of ignorance, vice, superstition, infidelity, is so extensive, so parched? When the most self-denying efforts can hardly grapple with the practical heathenism close at our doors, is it wise, is it just, to send forth the most devoted of our laborers to sow the seed and reap the harvest at the Antipodes? The answer to this question is obvious to every humble student of the Scriptures. God's command is distinct, and in hearty believing obedience to that command may we most expect His blessing to rest on our church and country. And thus earnest, self-denying efforts for the propagation of the Gospel abroad become a most effectual means of spreading true religion at home. For it is the arm of Jehovah alone

which can stem the torrent of ungodliness in our land which now makes the heart of the righteous sad; it is the Spirit of God lifting up the standard Who alone can resist the enemy when he is coming in like a flood. (Isa. lix. 19). We can build churches and schools, and find preachers and scripture-readers, but the attentive ear, and the understanding heart, and the new life is the gift of the Holy Ghost. And can we expect that He will bless our efforts at home if we neglect our duty abroad? Can we reasonably ask that He will largely increase His compassion *toward us*, if we selfishly contract ours toward our fellow-creatures. It may seem, at first sight, the dictate of sound reason to plead, "First evangelize more entirely your own country, and then extend your charity toward distant lands." But it will be found more in accordance with Scripture and apostolical practice and heaven-taught wisdom to say, "Seek to evangelize the world, and in so doing you will evangelize your own country." It seems an unwise proceeding to an ignorant person, unacquainted with commercial transactions, that so many articles of value should be exported hence to other countries. Such a one would argue, "Keep all your wealth at home; you need it for yourselves; wait till all your neighbors have enough before you waste your riches upon strangers." But the merchant well knows the fallacy of such reasoning; he knows that every enlargement of his commerce abroad creates an increase of substance at home, and that England herself grows rich by spreading her riches throughout the world. Even so is it with the riches of the everlasting gospel. Keep them to ourselves, and they will waste away and be lost; scatter them far and wide, and they will be repaid a hundredfold into our bosoms. God has, in His unsearchable counsels, given to this country an influence and authority throughout the globe never enjoyed by any nation before; and except this gift be employed for His glory and in extending His kingdom, it will be to us as a cankering rust to weaken and destroy our national prosperity. There is a very solemn warning in the verse immediately preceding my text: "But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt." Where the healing waters reach, but do not flow on, and remain stagnant, producing nothing but noisome vapors and rank, marshy weeds, there shall then be barrenness forever. The very retaining of the waters, instead of speeding them onward, renders the spot more accursed than if the waters had never reached it. And if England's Church fail of being a missionary church, and keep to herself the gospel prepared for all creatures under heaven, it will sap the very foundations of its usefulness at home. If England's favored sons fail of holding forth to them that sit in darkness that

Saviour who is the light of the world, then their candlestick of gospel privileges must be removed, and they themselves immersed in that spiritual darkness from which they refuse to deliver others.

Again, if the words of my text indicate the diffusive character of the gospel, the figure made use of is well calculated to check our entertaining too sanguine and mistaken conceptions asto the easy and immediate conversion of the heathen. The river, as it advances toward the ocean, must meet with many interruptions. Its broad surface will often be agitated by storms; its waves will dash against many a rock; and even at times the stream itself will seem to be diverted from its course and driven back by the obstacles it encounters. Yet to one who watches from some lofty eminence the windings of the river, does it clearly appear that, in spite of the various interruptions, the waters continue to advance. And have we any just reason for expecting that it shall be otherwise with regard to the holy waters of the sanctuary? One, indeed, there is who, from the height of His mediatorial throne, ever watches over the welfare and increase of that Church which He has purchased with His blood, and as He watches, "sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied" (Isa. liii. 11). But we, as we endeavor to speed on these healing, fertilizing waters, must be prepared to meet with many an obstacle, many a check. Nay, are not these hindrances and disappointments the very ground upon which the unbeliever and worldling base their plea that the picture of my text is but an illusion, and its prediction but an idle dream? "Nearly 2500 years," say they, "have elapsed since the prophet saw this cheering vision; more than 1800 years have passed since the little rill burst forth from the cross of Calvary, and where are the evidences of the healing influence of its holy waters? More than one-half of the known world is still immersed in heathen darkness, and a large portion of the professing Catholic Church is overspread with error and superstition." There is, we must own, but too much truth in this painful charge. And one chief and most obvious cause of this slow progress of Christianity is that the Church of Christ, from age to age, has allowed its conscience to be so deadened by worldliness and lukewarmness, that it has never realized, as it ought, its high calling as the herald of the glad tidings of salvation to the whole world; while it also could, I believe, be easily shown from the record of missionary labors, in any period of the Church's history, and preëminently during the present century, that whenever the pure seed of God's Word has been faithfully scattered, the Lord has poured down showers of blessings far in excess of the inadequate efforts of the laborer. But if the success of missionary endeavor has

been far greater than we have had any right to expect, considering the fewness of the preachers, and the little interest and self-denial manifested in their behalf by the Church at large, it would be still a most mistaken interpretation of the prophet's vision, and of the many promises in Holy Writ of the increase of the Messiah's kingdom, if we imagined that it is inconsistent with these bright and certain anticipations, that sin and error and superstition should maintain a mighty and even increasing hold upon a large portion of the human race. Is not the Church of Christ, so long as it continues on earth, to be a Church militant? Is Satan yet bound? Is the natural heart less hostile to the reception of the truth? Is the Church of Christ so pure and holy that it no longer needs the fiery trial of opposition and seeming want of success to purge the gold from the dross; requires no winnowing, through false teachers, of the wheat from the chaff? Nay, does not the Word of God expressly teach us that the tares are to grow with the wheat until the great harvest-day; that the conflict between light and darkness, truth and error, will be as fierce as ever until the end of this dispensation; and that, as the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, the war will wax fiercer, iniquity shall abound, the love of many wax cold, and Satan be revealed as having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time (Rev. xii: 12)?

Already may we discern many a sign of this final dying struggle of the prince of this world. We should indeed be blind and ungrateful if we did not, as we contemplate the condition of the Church of England at home and abroad, acknowledge a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in the increased and increasing zeal and faith and love of many of its members; but we should also be blind and self-deceived if we failed to discern the old enemies of the truth, unbelief and superstition, close at hand, invested with more than former power, making their assault on the very citadel of our Zion, so that those who would earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints must prepare themselves for a warfare more trying and severe than any which the Church has been called previously to endure. And if our national Church, together with the whole Church of Christ, has never been threatened before by foes so many and so strong, her faithful handmaid, the Church Missionary Society, cannot expect to escape from her share in the conflict. Hitherto her course has been like the holy waters of the text. The little rill which burst forth at the commencement of this century, and which seemed at first, to the critical eye of a worldly generation, so small and insignificant, has marvellously widened and deepened and overspread many a spiritual desert with those trees of grace whose fruit is for meat, and the leaf thereof for medi-

cine. These blessed results have not indeed been without many a conflict, many a disappointment, but through wisdom and grace abundantly vouchsafed to the managers, they have been guided successfully through these dangers, so that in the present day many of those holding the highest official positions, and consequently capable of forming an independent judgment, bear their disinterested testimony to the reality and usefulness of the work of this Society. And now, when so many favorable circumstances seemed to promise a future free from hindrances, and bright with success, a new and most perplexing form of opposition has manifested itself, to teach us, we doubt not, to beware of being tempted to rely on an arm of flesh, and to be satisfied with human favor and popularity, which so often prove a snare.

As the natural consequences of the Sacerdotalism which is so rapidly spreading, and so seriously endangering the spiritual life and truth of the Church at home, a deliberate attack has been made on the principles and practice of the Church Missionary Society, which, if successful, would be fatal not merely to its progress, but to its very existence, and which is the more insidious and dangerous because it proceeds from those who are sincere advocates for missionary effort. They assert that "the conversion of the world has been entrusted to the Church as a corporate body" (Bishop of Columbo; see *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, November, 1876). And in one sense we should all agree to this statement. "*Ye*," writes St. Paul, to the laity as much as to the presbyters of the Corinthian Church, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 27). And his view of what constitutes that corporate body he sets forth at the commencement of his letter, when he describes the Church of God as consisting of all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours (1 Cor. i. 2). Each of you, brethren, if "sanctified in Christ Jesus," whether you be a layman or a clergyman, are members of this spiritual body, and as such have each of you your sphere of work, your official duty, in aiding to save those souls for whom the Lord and Head of the whole body shed His precious blood. "Ye," said that Lord Himself, to every one of His followers, before the apostles or the seventy were chosen and sent forth, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. v. 14). So that every member of the holy Catholic Church is called by the Lord himself to bear his share in carrying out the apostolic injunction to all believers, to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life (Phil. ii. 15, 16). But it is not in this comprehensive and scriptural sense of the term "Church" that some demand that the Church should have the sole direction of the whole field of missionary labor. There is no more common source of fallacy than the

use in different senses of a word which has different meanings; and under the ambiguity of this word "Church" many a sophism has lurked, which it is not always easy to detect and expose, so that some are perplexed and staggered by the high-sounding claim that it is the Church, and not a voluntary society, which should alone send forth and direct the preachers of the Gospel. It is obvious, of course, that a church so numerous and extended as the national Church of England can never itself, in its aggregate capacity, undertake the task of regulating and superintending the countless practical details connected with the work of missions, but must entrust its responsibilities to a limited number of its members, authorized to act in its behalf. Hence the important question arises, What shall be the safest depository, who the most faithful representatives, of the will of the Church to make God's ways known upon earth?

Some would at once answer that in an Episcopal Church the Bishop, as the acknowledged head, should have absolute control over every detail and every person connected with the mission, from the aged missionary with forty years' experience, to the humble native catechist just entering on his work. Where to teach, whom to teach, what to teach, should be left entirely to the will of the Bishop, whose directions are to be obeyed without remonstrance, without hesitation, inasmuch as in spiritual matters, as it has been asserted, "the Bishop's word is law" (see *Ch. Miss. Intell.*, Nov., 1876). It is thus, it is maintained, and thus only, that unity in doctrine and discipline can be preserved. Yes, unity might thus be secured, but it might be the unity of error, not of truth; the oneness of form and ceremony, but the destruction of all spiritual life. Absolute despotism, as has often been argued, would be the best form of government in Church or State, if there were any security that the ruler would be perfect. But since this never can be the case in this fallen world—and despotic power ever gives evidence of its inherent faultiness by acts of wrong and oppression—it has been the wisdom of our nation, alike in Church and State, to limit by strict laws the extent of power entrusted to those in authority, and carefully to define what the superior may demand, and what the inferior must obey. Hence it is not absolute, but canonical obedience, which our Church claims in behalf of those to whom the chief government of the Church is committed; nor, so long as her counsels are regulated by a wisdom gained by long experience, will she be disposed to entrust to any foreign bishop, in countries where the wholesome check of public opinion does not operate to the same beneficial extent as in our own, an authority which is not confined within the same wise and just limits which curtail, but at the same time protect, the exercise of rightful prerogative by the bishops at home.

Others, again, who allow the folly and danger of giving absolute command over a mission to the individual bishop at its head, advocate the appointment of a Board of Missions, nominated by the whole Episcopate, or by the Houses of Convocation, and that to this Board all doubtful questions should be referred, and its decisions be accepted as final, inasmuch as they might be considered as conveying the judgment of the whole Church. But here again we discern the primary fallacy of sacerdotalism, which would represent the Church as consisting wholly of the clergy, and would ignore altogether the right of the laity to have any voice in spiritual matters. And even if on this Board of Missions there were admitted a just proportion of laymen, would it carry with it the confidence of Christian people, composed as it must be of such discordant elements, in the present divided and distracted condition of the Church? Or would the Evangelical section of the Church, that Church's most faithful members, those who in past days have done most for missions, find themselves adequately represented on such a Board? Rather would not the other schools of theology act as they have ever done, and combine to exclude them altogether, or to reduce their representatives to so insignificant a minority as to secure that they should have no share in the management? Assuredly if the large and influential Evangelical section of our Church is to bear its part in the missionary field, inasmuch as it can only aid in propagating that form of doctrine which is in harmony with its own views of what is *essential* truth, it must ever accomplish its important task by the instrumentality of a voluntary society. But is its voice, therefore, which has been raised so long, so faithfully, so successfully, not the voice of the Church? We confidently affirm that it is; and as the Evangelical body in the Church of England is the most faithful exponent of her Articles and Liturgy, neither tempted, on the one hand, to obscure their teaching by overlaying it with rubbish borrowed from the corrupt Church of Rome, nor seduced, on the other hand, to sacrifice dogmatic truth to the popular idol of the human intellect; so may we boldly maintain that the Church Missionary Society, as a voluntary society of Evangelical laity and clergy, more truly represents the will of the Reformed Protestant Church of England, and more distinctly speaks with the voice and authority of that Church, than would any single bishop, or Board of Bishops, or Diocesan Synod, or Provincial Convocation.

Once more, let us never forget, in connection with all missionary work, the most essential condition of all success set forth in the words of the text, "because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary." The message which the missionary has to deliver, and the spirit in which he has to

proclaim it, must be alike learned at the throne of grace. Hence, at the origin of the Church Missionary Society, an appeal was made in its earliest regulations that every member should "pray to Almighty God for a blessing upon its designs." And it has been in this spirit of prayer that the workhas eve r since been conducted. The Committee have been men of prayer ; they have constantly gone to the sanctuary for wisdom and guidance. Its supporters have realized the power of prayer; in the family and in the closet, from hundreds and thousands of lips and hearts, has the earnest cry ascended to the sanctuary that the dew of God's heavenly blessing might richly descend on the workmen and their work. And if, in answer to these constant intercessions, there had been vouchsafed to the Society marked and increasing success, I know not that the favorable result of these many prayers has been evidenced in any way more remarkably than in the manner in which the missionaries have been kept, by God's grace, sound in their faith and holy in their lives. The petition has ascended to the sanctuary that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth the laborers, and those who have gone forth have proved by word and deed, in life and death, that they have been *His* laborers, sent forth by Him. They have varied in abilities ; they have differed as to apparent success. Some have gone forth only to exhibit in an early death the power of that Gospel which they had longed to preach ; others have been spared through many a year to invite, and not in vain, a heathen multitude to avail themselves of the healing efficacy and cleansing power of the tree of life. But it is well worthy of remark, and claims our heartfelt gratitude to the Hearer of prayer, that very seldom has any anxiety been caused to the Society by the unfaithfulness or misconduct of any of its missionaries. They have gone forth in the strength of the Lord, and for His Name's sake, to preach to the Gentiles, and the arm of His love and power has upheld them from falling. Unharmed by those captivating snares of unbelief and superstition which have caused so many in our own land to stumble, they have continued loyal to their Lord and to His Church, earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and proving themselves, like the early missionary Barnabas, good men, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. We have had a most gratifying, though melancholy, evidence of the Christian consistency and self-denying fidelity of our missionaries in the recent troubles which have befallen the Church in the Diocese of Colombo. They have been exposed to a trial of their wisdom and faith of no ordinary severity. Isolated in their position, with no opportunity of consulting the Committee at home as to the course which they should

adopt, with strong pressure put upon them by those in authority—a pressure so strong that he who used it hesitates not to describe it by the unusual term of "coercion," with the threat before them, after years of hard and faithful service, of having a stigma cast on their fair fame by the withdrawal of their licenses (a punishment ordinarily reserved for the case of those guilty of some serious moral offence), they yet wavered not as to the path of duty, for they saw clearly that the preservation of the simplicity of the Gospel was at stake, and that the faith of their converts would be imperiled by the introduction of ceremonies and ornaments too much resembling the idolatrous rites which these converts had so recently renounced. Oh, how galling to the natural heart! how calculated to excite bitterness of spirit, that in return for all the discouragements which they had endured, and the difficulties which they had surmounted in missionary work, they should secure from him who was set over them, himself a novice in the missionary field, nothing but censure and the severest form of penalty. Yet the Bishop himself honorably bears witness to the gentleness of spirit manifested by these sorely-tried ministers of Christ; more than once personally thanks them for the attention and deference shown to himself; and in writing to the Secretary of the Society on this painful subject says: "Let me bear my testimony to the piety, zeal, and ability of the missionaries, and to the charity, moderation, and respect for myself, which they have displayed, even while repudiating my authority on essential points." All honor to these brave, humble men of heart, who were content to bear reproach and injury rather than compromise the simplicity of that Gospel which they had received of the Lord Jesus! All praise to the Giver of all good, who granted to His faithful ministers to exhibit the meekness of wisdom and charity while they quitted themselves like men in standing "fast for the faith" (1 Cor. xvi. 14), and who chose rather to endure the bitter pang of being separated from their beloved flocks, and debarred from all ministerial work, than by a submission to unjust and illegal demands to sanction the introduction into the native Church of practices which they rightly deemed to be symbols of vital error. May He, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, and who has hitherto so wonderfully and graciously directed the counsels of the Society, and upheld the steps of its missionaries, still vouchsafe to be their Ruler and Guide; so that with unwavering zeal and faithfulness, undeterred by the misrepresentations of opponents, or staggered by the compromising suggestions of half-hearted friends, they may continue to plant in the most distant and dreariest deserts of heathendom that tree of life "whose fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

Harps on the Willows.

PREACHED AT THE BRICK CHURCH, NEW YORK, BY THE **Rev. Llewelyn D. Bevan, LL.B.**

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.—Psalm cxxxvii: 2.

THIS is a beautiful and pathetic picture of the captive Jews and their sorrows in the land of Babylon. Scattered throughout that country, the prisoners of Zion were fain oftentimes to wander by the sides of its numerous water-courses, and pensively meditate upon their forlorn condition. The murmur of the waters, as they ran softly beneath the willows, seemed in sweet and melancholy harmony with their own saddened hearts.

The musical instruments, upon which in former days they had loved to exercise their national proficiency, lay silent, useless in their hands. At length they sat down by the river, and hanging their harps upon the branches of the trees, they gave themselves up to the indulgence of their sorrow.

They thought of Zion and her scenes of joy. The busy streets were now silent and deserted. The temple was in ruins. The land was everywhere a waste, inhabited only by a few scattered strangers, and the wild beasts which had intruded into the abodes of former activity and life. They themselves were far away from home, stangers, exiles, captives in Babylon. What could they do, but bitterly and silently drop their tears into the waves that played at their feet, and with harps hanging on the willows, weep when they remembered Zion!

And is not that a picture of many conditions of our human life? We are away from home, and homesick. Sorrow has invaded our lives, and wrung our hearts into a sad and despairing mood. We have no spirit for any occupation. The brightest and the merriest circumstances awake no response within our souls.

Forth we wander by the side of some Babylonian stream. We sit down upon its bank. We hang our harp upon the willow that bends above it, and, like the exiled Jews, we weep when we remember the happier moments that have fled.

There are three things that we would learn from this picture of sorrow. Every man has a harp. Sometimes he must hang his harp upon the willows. He has no reason, however, to throw his harp away.

1. *Every man has a harp.*

The harp was the well-known instrument for the accompaniment of song. Its music was sweet and delightful. By its strains the melancholy of Israel's king was dispersed. When calamity fell upon the nation, their harps were silenced, broken, and cast away.

And thus it is with all our lives. We have the elements of

joy in them, the powers of song and gladness; and there is no man who has not the capacity and the occasion for delightful mirth.

Just think of the constitution of our nature, wherein a place is secured for joy.

The body is attuned to pleasure and happiness. God might have made us with organizations fitted for life, for recreation, for intelligence and activity, and yet altogether without the capacity of experiencing pleasure. Take, for example, the sense of sight. The fine adjustments of the visual organs might have been as perfect as they are now. The laws of light might have been precisely in accordance with the powers of vision. We may have seen and appreciated shape and relations of space, and even color, and yet there may have been no pleasure in sight, and the eye would not have delighted itself with seeing. But now behold what joy there is in light and color! There is something more than mere information in the aspect of things visible. The bloom upon the cheek of childhood, the light that gleams within the eye of beauty, the forms of strength and activity, the colors of the rainbow, the tints of the flowers, the azure of the sky, the sapphire of the sea, the emerald of the grass—these now are delights; and a peculiar sense of pleasure is experienced as the eye looks out upon the beauty which God has lavished everywhere. Or, again, consider the sense of hearing. Sounds might have been so indistinct that to hear would have required the constant exercise of attention, the strain of effort painful and wearying; or they might have been so powerful that a whisper would be shocking, whilst the natural speech of our friends would be like the explosion of cannon close to the ear. And yet, how exquisitely has God harmonized the sound and the sense! They agree so accurately, they respond so truly, that hearing is musical; and perhaps the most perfect of all the sensations is that which results from the delicate blending of the harmonious and consonant, now heard in the sweet, low voice of the cultured woman, now ravishingly produced by the concerted music of choral antiphonies.

What a harp man possesses in physical nature if he would only let its music be heard! Every sight and sound, every scene and action, the birds in the air, the cattle on a thousand hills, the activities of the cities, the quiet beauties of rural life —all things fair and good, bright and godly, are but fingers of Nature's skilful hand which will touch the strings of the harps of our being and wake their perfect tones of rapture.

Play upon me, I beseech you, ye physical powers, and discourse the pleasant cadences of the lower world!

But if we ascend the scale of human being, we shall still find that man has the harp for pleasant accompaniment of

happy song in the region of the immaterial and the intellectual. We often attach the thought of pleasure to the physical alone, and indeed there is danger lest we should degrade and corrupt the word itself until it has reference only to the material. "A man of pleasure," we say, when we mean a man whose delights are almost wholly animal and sensuous. We forget that pleasure belongs to the mind as well as to the body.

What delights there are in intellectual operations! The joy of learning—when it is indeed learning worthy of the name; the discovery of the unknown; the pursuit of the law which underlies obscure phenomena; the search for causes; the enumeration of effects—all these and others, the noble energies of the human intellect, afford keen and lasting delight.

What an unutterable moment was that in the life of the patient explorer into Nature's recesses when a substance hitherto unknown, unsuspected, came up in the experimental vessel, and presented itself before his eyes! As he gazed down into the fluid, he felt a strange, unaccountable thrill pass through his heart. His throat seemed to be choked. His whole frame shook with suppressed emotion. There was a tremor in the solution; it seemed to stir with a feeling sympathetic with his own; and then, as a wave or two passed over its surface and there leaped up into the light a bright metallic globule that shone for an instant and disappeared, the experimenter was fain to grasp at the table before him, lest he should fall with the intensity of the delight that filled his spirit.

Was it not the hand of the Creator reaching down to the harp of his mental being, and striking a chord on it responsive to that which the stars of the morning chanted when they saw Creation's work?

But these delights, the music of our being, cannot be compared to the pleasure which belongs to the still higher sphere which we are privileged to enter. I forbear to pursue the delights of our soul in its affections—the raptures of home, the loves of children, friends,—the sweet sympathies of husband, wife, family, country, kind. Let me now only remind you of that sacred melody which is attuned when the joys of the spirit are experienced.

The sinner seeks his Saviour, and finds the pardon of Father and of Friend. If the shepherd has joy when he carries home the sheep, what think you must be the delight of the poor wanderer to feel beneath him the strong shoulders of the pastor, or rest in his tender arms. Whose joy should be the deepest, the parent's whose son has come home again, or the prodigal's, who has met with the welcome of forgiveness and love? You remember the hour of forgiveness, my brother. Heaven's clouds were cleared, the storm was hushed, the dread was dissipated, and a Father's love received you through the mighty merits of

a Saviour's death. It is no wonder that the Church's sweetest hymns tell of this delightful peace and blessedness; and yet the best music of all the Christian poets falls far short of the rapture which dwells within the forgiven heart.

And with what language shall we tell of the occasions for harping that have occurred so often since the first forgiveness. Have there not been Bethels of a Divine covenanting, Horebs of refreshment, and Red Sea passages of deliverance and triumph? With Miriam we have clashed the cymbals, and almost forgotten the solemn dignity of our kingship as we danced with David before the ark of God. Prayer has had its blessed answers, and meditation its holy raptures. Nothing but song could express our heightened feeling; and we felt as if angel hands were sweeping the chords of our harp of life, and making the glad accompaniment to our joyous mode. The only words that could express our feelings were those of the prophet: "The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head." Truly, indeed, every man has a harp.

Remember, brethren, this harp must be tuned and practised on. There was never yet a musician of skill who had not gained his skilfulness by constant and incessant industry. The musical art must be served with ceaseless devotion. Practice alone can make the master here.

And so with the instrument. It must be tuned and played on. It would seem as if the fibres of the material took to themselves the music, and underwent some strange transformation beneath the influence of the sweet sounds. Hence we say, the musician *draws out* the melody as though it had been hidden by his former art within the boards of the instrument. And the harp of our nature must thus be tuned and made melodious by constant use. Do not be afraid, then, of playing upon these pleasurable chords of being. They will gain sweetness and tune only thus by practising. And yet it is the last thing some Christians think of—tuning their harp. They let down the strings into a flaccid looseness until no sound can be gotten out of them but the subdued hum that seems only struggling into melody; or they tighten up the chords until nothing but most high-pitched shrillness is given forth, and sometimes with a touch the strings crack and break. Give way to your pleasurableness. Do not check it. Enjoy this life, the nature that is so good. Use your minds with gladness. Above all, as Christians, be glad. God is the "happy God," and His people have the birthright of happiness too. Let Zion re-echo with your songs. Be good gladly. Press on to heaven with delight, as a schoolboy on his homeward journey the first day of the vacation, as an exile voyaging to the shores of his native land.

2. But sometimes *the harp has to be hung upon the willows.*

In the land of Babylon the Israelites had no heart to sing, and the accompaniment, therefore, was useless. Tears were the only outpourings of which they were capable, and in the intervals of the flowing tears they could only mourn their melancholic state.

And so is it with the harps of life. We have to lay them aside or hang them upon willows that droop over rivers of sadness, by whose banks we sit and wail.

There is no music in the harp of physical nature. We are weary or worn, it may be, wasted by disease, or in that strange, indefinable condition when, knowing not what ails us, we only know that a misery dark and doleful presses down our spirit.

Some people are affected thus by outward physical circumstances. The day is dark and dreary, the damp of the atmosphere seems to strike chill even upon our souls. The song birds have ceased their carol, and a like responsive silence falls upon our depressed natures. The most beautiful objects fail to arouse our interest; we take delight in nothing, and we cannot sing. Some may overcome the feeling, and by a strong effort of will rouse themselves to action, and even to cheer; but others are completely mastered by the external condition, and can only in patience await a change.

It is thus when disease invades our bodies or sorrow smites the soul. Songs are not suitable to funerals, and harpings in the house of mourning are out of place and impertinent. As we stand and watch the sufferings of those we love; as, perhaps, we almost reckon by the minute-hand of the watch the failing pulse of a dying friend; as we stand by the still, cold body which is all that remains of what once we loved, then, indeed, it is vain to bid us sweep the chords of our harp and sing even a song of Zion.

There are some silences still more profound that fall upon the music of our life. There are no songs for those who, by sacred ties of affection, come very near to those who plunge into some awful sinfulness and persevere in a course of certain ruin. The father whose eldest son forswears his father's faith, and throws away his father's virtues, and wins only a name that will be a dishonor among men—such a father has little heart for harpings, and is, indeed, in a silent land of bitter exile. The only child of some loving mother, who knows no law but waywardness, and makes love a license for wrongdoing, is no glad subject for the pleasant strains of melody.

And then how useless is the harp when we ourselves are in the hours of spiritual distress! God is absent, and we know no gladness till He shows His face again. While the Bridegroom was with them, there was no need for the disciples to fast; but the days would come when the Bridegroom should be taken

away, and then they would fast in those days. They sang a hymn when the Master was among them, even though when they rose from the Supper it was to pass to Gethsemane, and Pilate's Bar, and Calvary. But their hearts had no desire for singing in the suspense and numb agony of the hour when the Christ lay dead. And so is it with the Christian still. When it seems as if the Lord had died, when we fail even to find the dead body of the Master, everything lost, then there are no harpings for us. Doubt, despondency, despair, fear, and faithlessness, perhaps our own want of vigilance and zeal —only these felt—then the spirit is cast down and we have no heart to sing withal. These times of Babylonian exile, shame and sorrow, come to all of us, and we sit down by the rivers and hang our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3. But observe, though there is no heart or place for song, and the harp must be laid aside, *it needs not to be cast away.*

They had been foolish and wicked men of Israel if they had flung their harps beneath the running river, and thus deprived themselves altogether of the means of melody when the days of joy came back again. Truly, it was seventy years —long years of waiting—before the exile was over, and the Babylonian woe had ceased. Still, the ages wore away at last, and multitudes went back to the Holy Land, and set up Jerusalem again, and built the Temple, and sang the Lord's song —not in the land of strangers, but in their own loved home. It was a wondrous scene, told by the scribe in one of the most beautiful passages of gladness and delight (Ezra iii: 9-13): "Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons of their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

So, brethren, cast not away your harp. The weather will clear and the soul will awake to gladness when the sunshine comes.

The storm is over, and the birds that cowered frightened and half dead have plumed their ruffled feathers and are upon the topmost boughs, and into the light that follows the darkness they pour their merry song from well-nigh bursting throats. It is not always winter, and summer, golden, bright and glad, will appear. If March has her cold winds, May will have her flowers, and there will be need for gladness yet.

And the sickness will depart and the strengthened frame shall recover its wonted sense of health and vigor. Not always the darkened room, the footstep on tiptoe, the hush that dwells through all the house. Listen! there!—the song, the music; the invalid is at the harp and strikes forth a merry melody.

Yea, and there shall be some hours of gladness even for the wailing, weary heart that sickens over the sinfulness of child and friend. It was a sad home when the prodigal was far away. But one day the father saw the returning son, ragged, worn and disgraced, and that night there was music and dancing in the long silent homestead. Keep your harp, my friend; and, if it be possible, keep it in tune. Prayer shall be answered, covenant shall yet be kept.

And thou! too, depressed and cast down Christian, throw not away thy harp. There shall be peace and joy and fullness of blessing yet for thee. God shall show Himself, and Christ will yet return. On the road to Emmaus their hearts burned within them. A song then would have been welcomed, and though they knew Him not, their Lord was at their side.

The time when the harp shall be needed, may not come until the moment of death. A life of sorrow, doubt or conflict may not have one hour of leisure or delight, and only swan-like can be the song; and yet, then the harp will be needed, though only one chord may be struck from it upon earth—its strains sounding amid the music of heaven. Then, for all a harp will be gained, for all shall sing the new song of Moses and the Lamb.

As I thus closed my meditation, a thought, or perhaps rather a fancy, passed through my mind. Are the harps of heaven ever silenced? Is there to-day any harp hanging upon the branches of the trees which are by the river of the water of life? If so, they are waiting only for the joy—the highest heaven knows—the return of some sinner upon earth to his Father and his God. Brethren, is it your impenitence which silences the songs of heaven? Now, then, yield to the proffer of the mercy that is in Christ, so that there may be the joyful strains swept from the harps above to accompany the songs which tell of some of you converted, saved to-day!

"The Old Faith or the New Faith?"

A SERMON

By Rudolf Kögel, D.D.

(Translated by Rev. Ernst H. Lübkert, A.M.)

1 Kings xviii: 17–40.

"THE OLD FAITH OR THE NEW FAITH," this was the title of a book which appeared some time ago. Its author, in the meanwhile, has been summoned away, but its significance and effect have by no means become extinct. "The old faith or the new faith," this is the battle cry which, openly or covertly, now in this form and again in another, agitates families and society, the press, the ruling classes and those that are ruled. Our text also bears this superscription, "The old faith or the new faith."

Elijah, the prophet, represents the old faith; King Ahab and his Phœnician wife, Jezebel, together with a double train of four hundred prophets of Baal, represent the new or modern faith. Not all that is *old* deserves praise, for there are also old errors. Not all that is *new* deserves censure and rejection, for every discovery in the kingdom of God is new. Since the "*Eternal*" is *old* and the "*Old*" is *eternal*, it can be only temporarily obstructed and obscured by delusive innovations. In truth, Christianity is the mild, primeval wine of the primitive gospel, which flowed from the gates of Paradise. Evil, with its unbelief and heathenism, have permeated it. But it is a power condemned already beforehand. There is an apparent victory, but there is also a final and disgraceful defeat. The Gospel for this day tells us to "Beware of false prophets." It propounds to you this serious question: *The old faith or the new faith? What will be your decision?*

1. An answer to this question is *unavoidable:* therefore, *decide!*

2. An uncertain answer is *untenable:* therefore, *abstain from giving it!*

3. The answer of the living God is *unequivocal:* therefore, *remain decided!*

1. Far off glitters the Mediterranean beneath a cloudless sky. Mount Carmel towers solemnly above it and greets the lucid, snowy peaks and the green cedar clusters of distant Lebanon. Here, near an old, long since ruined altar, God's judgment is to be held. Here a sacred process is to be brought to a final issue. Israel, God's chosen people, but inveigled into idolatry by its rulers, is here to be forced to a decision!

"Twelve stones are taken, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, and with the stones is built an

altar in the name of the Lord." It represents the covenanted people of Israel in its unity, and it is here to come to a consciousness of this fact, that it is now not a question about private opinions or private matters, but about the weal or the woeof the entire nation, about the basis of its existence and about the future of its mission.

An irreconcilable contrast is here presented to us when we hear Elijah asking: Is the Lord God the living God, who has made the earth and the sea, and created man in His image; who has chosen Israel for His servant and constituted prophets, and who has given the law and inclined His ear to our prayers, and saves His people again and again by a holy and merciful Providence? Is He God? This is the old faith!

Or is Baal God? the newly imported idol from Phenice, a caricature of Moloch, with his voluptuous ritual and child murder, that Baal of whom it was mockingly said: "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking or he is pursuing; or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened." This is the new faith, spread among us by stratagem, or forced upon us by violence.

Year after year such an irreconcilable contrast in religious opinions and hopes increases and takes hold of whole classes of people to a greater or less extent. I do not allude now to those so-called confessional disputes in theology, their merits or demerits. The contrast to which I refer is this: Is *the* Lord God "who spake and it was done: who commanded and it stood fast"; *that* Lord whom Abraham knew and Moses recognized by name: whom Elijah called upon and Jesus addressed as His Father? Is He God? Then believe Him capable also to judge the world, to answer prayer, to fulfill those prophetical declarations which He inspired His prophets to utter and to breathe upon the dry bones that they may be reunited in new strength and glory through Him who is light and life! Or, perchance, is that new faith right? Is God *no living, personal* Being? Is Nature the basis and origin of all things? Nature, assuming the name of Mother, but so often acting very step-motherly? Is there only a Universe acting as a father, but, with ears deaf and a heart unfeeling, performing the part of a very unnatural father? Are force and matter, fate and accident, materialism and Pantheism, the gods and idols which are now here and now there, now ebbing and now at full tide, now foaming and now dreaming—are they God? If this be so, then close your Bibles, lock your churches, remove from the graves the symbols of your faith, send those who pray, the sooner the better, into the mad-houses, and banish from your language the absurd difference between good and evil. Do not blame him who possesses nothing for coming into conflict with him who possesses much. Instead of fidelity between husband

and wife; in the place of reverence on the part of children toward their parents; instead of all ties that bind society, let selfishness and passion rule, and upon the world's history, because it is no more than simply nature's history, imprint the mark of the beast!

If the Holy Scriptures are God's word, then submit to it, body and soul. Upon this rock you must build your houses as against storms and tempests; upon this rock you must build your churches as against the gates of hell. If, however, it be nothing more than a book full of superstition and chimerical fancies, or fantastical delusions or antiquated notions, then prohibit its entrance into your houses and schools. Aye, do as that pope did who forbade the Bible, and endeavored to brand the Bible Society as a pestiferous calamity.

If man is placed on the dividing line between two worlds, and bears God's image and feels His breath in his breast; if he has a longing for the Father's eternal mansions which cannot be eradicated; if he possesses such a religious feeling, as priceless as a royal crown, then attune your harps and sing those hopeful songs, that they may resound in the chambers of death and penetrate the very graves: "Jesus lives, and I in Him."

But if man be only a more highly developed animal; if will and heart and conscience be nothing more than physical expressions; if our existence here be nothing else but that of an ephemeral insect, which for one day either hangs mournfully upon a leaf during the rain, or plays and dances in the glittering sunlight, then begin to-day to learn, instead of these venerable chorals of ours, the melody to this song: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" If Jesus is the Mediator, full of grace and truth, having the word of pardon, ever ready with His miraculous assistance, justifying us by His cross and His glorious resurrection and the sacred influences of the Holy Spirit—if He is God's only begotten Son, then, my brethren, give Him your hands and your hearts, and follow after Him as your Lord, your Shepherd and your Saviour.

But if Jesus be only the carpenter's son, full of all kinds of frenzy and self-glorification, making dismal assertions and blasphemous pretensions, and, as His final fate, well deserving to be crucified, then turn your backs upon Him, the sooner the better, and regret nothing so much as that you abided with Him so long. "The old faith or the new faith?" Decide for yourselves! Elijah, Jesus Himself, the legions of angels, God, the Holy Judge, they are present, they listen, they wait for your decision!

II. An *uncertain* answer is *untenable*. It is, "For or against God." As soon as a decision is made, there is a resolution also to leave neutral ground. By degrees only do the people of Israel receive clearer conceptions. There is at first no answer

at all. But when the question is raised as to their vacillation, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" they can no longer refuse to give a more decided answer. They receive with approbation the proposal that each party should call down fire upon their sacrifice, and thus submit their worship to an ordeal. And when at length the grand issue is presented to their view, they break forth into a storm of applause and jubilation: "The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!"

Now, is this universal cry of approbation to be relied upon? After sad experiences of the past, will it prevail?—experiences which demonstrate the fact that so many arguments on the part of God had been unavailing, and so many vows on the people's part had been broken? We may be permitted also to ask, Did God deserve such treatment that He should be made inferior to Baal, that His altars should go to ruin, that by the indifference of thousands, bloodthirsty Jezebel might be encouraged in her delight of persecution? Upon whom rested the blame, if not upon those who remained neutral, and who comforted themselves in the thought that they did not go quite as far as the more decided opponents of truth? They were responsible for the victorious progress of the enemies, for it is always so that those who call themselves merely neutral will eventually become the victims of those that are more decided. Jezebel desires nothing but evil. Elijah wishes nothing but *good*. Whose fault is it that no rain descends from Heaven, and no vegetation springs forth from the ground? Whose fault is it that Elijah is forced to hide himself by the brook Cherith and become a fugitive? Is it the fault of Baal's prophets only? No; it is the fault of that unreliable, indifferent, idle throng, with no affection for the God of their fathers, with no word of encouragement for the prophet, and with no real hatred of falsehood, whether it appear in the disgraced diadem of royalty or the assumed garb of prophecy. Through his indecision Ahab fell. His heathen wife had no sooner brought him into the presence of Baal's prophets and their false altars, than he manifested a preference for spiritual darkness. If he ever remembered the piety of former years, the threads of this remembrance were very slender and easily broken, and he became too weak for resistance. When the famine comes upon the land, he feels, perhaps, the rod of correction in it, but not himself does he accuse, but Elijah, the man of God: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 'Tis the old story: "Not sin is the perdition of the people, but those who remonstrate against it." Thus in Philippi the accusation was made against the Apostles, "These men do exceedingly trouble our city," which was changed in Thessalonica into the outcry, "Those that have turned the world upside down have

come hither also." With such people the real disturber of the peace is not the devil, but He that shall bruise the serpent's head.

Now think you, Christian friends, can the service of God and that of Baal be reconciled? Is it possible that Christianity and Materialism can be brought into harmony? Is there no difference between "yes and no"? Are the old faith and the new faith the same? Is it possible to erect a church with an ambiguous creed: that the false prophets should be placed side by side with the true ones: that ravenous wolves should be put into the same fold with the lambs? Is it possible to swim *with* and at the same time *against* the stream? Are the grain of wheat and weeds to be treated alike? No: a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; neither do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles."

Liberty in Christ and the kingdom of heaven are not gained by false neutrality. They only gain it who are serious and earnest. Let Elijah speak, with his true manliness, with the two-edged sword of the Divine Word, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Joshua—grey-haired Joshua—full of gracious experiences, demands the same decision in this matter: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Our Lord Jesus Himself, when demonstrating the utter impossibility of harmonizing idolatry and the service of God, declares: "No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." And again, addressing His disciples, after many had gone and left him, He invites their decision by the simple question, "Will ye also go away?" calling forth that noble confession of Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Paul most decidedly asserts, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." And mournfully doth the angel proclaim unto the Church of Laodicea, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Are not all these declarations and warnings sufficient to teach us that heavenly wisdom which warns us that it is impossible to serve God with a divided heart, but that duty requires to throw away all our idols and give praise and glory only to God? Different, indeed, is the old order of things from the new. The Old Testament economy differs

from that of the New, and we do not stand in need now of Elijah's sword against Baal's prophets. For the Spirit teaches us whose children we are, and the mercy of the New Covenant will avail us in the Day of Judgment. But as regards this service of God, it is necessary to be decided.

III. *How does the Lord Himself decide?* His answer is *unequivocal*, and bids you adhere to your decision: "And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." Behold how the prophets of Baal toil from morning till noon, and hear how they shout themselves hoarse around their altars, irritated by the bitter taunts, "Cry aloud!" Behold them as they endeavor to move silent Baal to give a merciful answer. Behold them as they "cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets," dancing around their altars in the vain hope of arousing a spirit of prophecy. Behold them to the number of four hundred against that single Elijah, hoping for victory. But "there is neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." From the lips of Elijah, however, ascends far above the altars this hearty prayer: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again." And behold, "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." That was the same glorious fire which appeared once at Aaron's first sacrifice; the same fire which came down from heaven and filled the temple of Solomon, just dedicated, with "the glory of the Lord." And this fiery token calls upon the people to return to their God, as it is a sign of Divine approbation to Elijah, and an undeniable vindication of the living God.

Beloved in the Lord, there is a fire from God, whether it comes in the thunder clouds of heaven, or comes forth from the earthquake in the dismal depths, or whether it is a flame hurled from war's murderous hands; whether a fire that justice brings as an answer to avarice, and violence, and impurity, and deception, and scorn, and hypocrisy, or whether a fire that reflects in a threatening manner within the recesses of a guilty conscience; there is such a fire of Almighty God which gives an answer, directly by means of His justice, or indirectly through man's agency. Such an answer by fire has judged mankind at many times and in many ways. At a time when the seventh commandment is so fearfully disregarded, in localities where there are not wanting such who almost glorify adultery, in the midst of such who flatly deny God's eternal justice, the pulpit dare not be silent, but rather declare God's perfect abil-

ity to respond by fire. Sodom's crimes received an answer by fire, in the horrors of the Dead Sea which God sends. God answers by fire to the people of Jerusalem that crucify their Messiah, for on the smoking ruins of their temple are displayed the Roman standards. France expels its Protestant citizens and beheads its king, but behold the answer by fire, first in the Revolution, afterward in Communism, demonstrating that "offences must come, but woe unto him by whom they come." And unless we too reform and amend, we must likewise perish.

But, dear friends, God forbid that I should confine the vital power of such a Divine answer to those only who do wrong. God's favor and blessing rest upon this atoning sacrifice on Mount Carmel. There is upon another mount—Calvary—displayed the sacrifice above all other sacrifices, the all-sufficient one of the Son. God responded with fire when on Eastermorn He dispelled all fear and fulfilled the anxious expectation of those that waited for the promised Comforter on the day of Pentecost. He answers yet by fire. Behold that youthful pair of inquirers seeking the Lord in the midst of doubts and misgivings, seeking Him by historical researches, or in the torments of an awakened conscience, or in Nature's temple, or in the sacred Scriptures. And while now in solitude, and again unitedly, they lift up their hearts in prayer, the Lord suddenly answers by fire. He kindles within them, in a mysterious manner, but not to be denied, a conviction of faith which cannot be eradicated. He causes their hearts to "burn within them," because they are near their risen Lord, who accepts their service for life as a pleasing sacrifice. Take another illustration of the manner in which God answers by fire. Behold yon family. There is no peace, there is no love, there is no confession of blame; there is mutual crimination in secret, there is a reciprocal charge of egotism. Like vines that cannot wind themselves around a tree or on a wall, so are their children, because they can find no one upon whom to lean for a support. Does it advantage them that they pass each other with gloomy mien and sad countenances? Is it of any benefit to them that they pursue the same path of life but never walk in friendly unison together? Who is it that creates a heart, purified and cleansed from all selfishness, if not that new influence of the spirit of love which can change a stone and melt the metal? That they may be taught to bring their petitions before God, He mercifully sends the fire of His Divine love. There is untold suffering in the world. True, there are some who, in their stoical apathy think that there is no other way of carrying this load of sorrow than that of gloomy resignation. But they know not that there is a hope, which maketh not ashamed; that the comforting power of the Holy Spirit is felt in the night of tribulation; that Christians can even rejoice in

tribulation because there is *one* hand which shall, as they fondly anticipate, wipe away all tears from their eyes. Who is it that teaches us affectionately to take hold of this Father's hand, to have a childlike trust and submission? Who, if not the Lord, answering by fire and changing the stony hearts? No spiritual quickening can be obtained by mere physical effort; no revival of the Church can proceed from simple excitement. As Elijah was surrounded by those "seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal," so God gathers unto Himself a host of praying ones, inasmuch as He alone is able to do it—He who answers prayer and gives fire and rain, each in due time.

Beholding thus Elijah, the man of God, upon Mount Carmel, we, too, may ask God that He would give us, like him, a holy zeal in the midst of the idolatry pursued in our times by a blind multitude, that we may not bend our knees to idols, but stand fast and remain firm as God's witnesses.

Triunity and Tritheism.

A LECTURE

By the Rev. Joseph Cook.

[The remarkable course of lectures, just ended, by Joseph Cook, in Tremont Temple, Boston, has awakened a world-wide interest. The aim has been to meet from the standpoint of philosophy the philosophical objections to Christianity—a task frequently attempted by very able speakers and writers before, but never by one who, all in all, combined such wonderful gifts of oratory with so thorough a knowledge of the natural sciences, especially as developed during the last decade, and of the doctrines of Christianity as held by the Orthodox Church. The following is one of the ablest of this course of lectures. Although previously published in the Boston *Advertiser*, and copied from its columns into other papers, we reprint it here, believing that our subscribers will deem it abundantly worthy of a place in our bound volume.—*Note to publication in The Complete Preacher.*]

There is a dim twilight of religious experience in which the soul easily mistakes Ossa and Parnassus for Sinai and Calvary. My feeling is that orthodoxy itself lives much of the time in this undispersed twilight; and that the unscientific and lawless liberalism of many half-educated people who have lost the Master's whip of small cords, believe in æsthetic but not in moral law, and proclaim that in the last analysis there is in this universe nothing to be feared—Dr. Bartol says so—and, therefore, we must add, nothing to be loved! It is always in an earlier and deeper shadow of that misleading haze. The gray, brindled dawn is better than night; but the risen sun is better than the gray, brindled dawn. We must startle mere æsthetics and literary religiosity out of its dream that it is religion by exhibiting before it the difference between the admiration and the adoration of the attributes of the Holy Person the moral law reveals. If any who are orthodox in their thoughts worship in their imagination three different beings, they, too, must be startled from this remnant of paganism by a stern use of the scientific method.

As Carlyle says of America, so I of this hushed, reverent discussion: Do not judge of the structure while the scaffolding is up. A glimpse only of the opening of the unfathomable theme which the distinction between the Triunity of the Divine Nature and Tritheism suggests can be given here and now; and more than this will be expected by no scholar. Reserving qualifications for later occasions, I purposely present to-day only an outline, unobscured by detail. I know what I venture in definition and illustration; but I am asking no one to take my opinions. Nevertheless, in order yet further to save time, I am to cast myself abruptly into the heart of this topic, and to give you personal conviction. After all, that is what serious men want from each other, and the utterance of it is not egotism in you or in me. It is the shortest

way of coming at men's hearts, and it is sometimes the shortest way in which to come at men's heads, to tell what you, willing to take the leap into the Unseen, personally are depending upon.

What is the definition of the Trinity?

1. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one God.
2. Each has a peculiarity incommunicable to the others.
3. Neither is God without the others.
4. Each, with the others, is God.

That I suppose to be the standard definition; and if you will examine it, you will find it describing neither three separate individualities nor yet three mere modes of manifestation; that is, neither tritheism nor modalism. In God are *not* three wills, three consciences, three intellects, three sets of affections. The first of all the religious truths of exact research is that the Lord our God is one God. It is the immemorial doctrine of the Christian ages that there are not three gods, but only one God—(Athanasian Creed). He is one substance; and in that one substance are three subsistences. But the subsistences are not individualities. All the great symbols teach decisively that we must not unify the subsistences; but, with equal decisiveness, they affirm that we must not divide the substance. In our present low estate as human, we find, by the experience of centuries, that we do well to heed both these injunctions and to look on the Divine nature on all the sides on which it has revealed itself, if we would not fall into the narrowness of materialism on the one hand, or into the vague ways of tritheism or pantheism on the other.

How shall we make clear in our intellectual and emotional experiences the truth of the Trinity, and at the same time keep ourselves in the attitude of those who worship one God, and who, therefore, do not break or wish to break with science, and yet in the position of those who in the one substance worship three subsistences, and therefore do not break or wish to break with the very significant record of the most fruitful portion of the Church through 1,800 years? For one, accepting the definition of the Trinity which I have now given, as neither trithestic nor modalistic—if the learned men here will allow me for once to use technical terms—I, personally, find no difficulty in this doctrine in the shape of self-contradiction in either thought or terms; and I find infinite advantages in it when I wish to conjoin biblical and scientific truth as a transfiguration for life.

It is sometimes despairingly said that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be illustrated. And this is true. It is the proverb of philosophy that no comparison walks on four feet; and what I am about to say, you will take as intended by me to exhibit only the parallelisms which I point out. I am re-

sponsible for no unmentioned point in a comparison. No doubt you can find as many places where the illustration I am to use will not agree with the definition as I can places where it does agree. Nevertheless, after dwelling on perhaps a hundred other illustrations, my own thoughts oftenest and with most of reverence come back to this.

Take the mysterious, palpitating radiance which at this instant streams through the solar windows of this Temple, and may we not say, for the sake of illustration, that it is one substance? Can you not affirm, however, that there are in it three subsistences? It would be possible for me by a prism here, to produce the seven colors on a screen yonder. I should have color there, and heat here, and there would be luminousness everywhere. But in color is a property incommunicable to mere luminousness or to heat. In luminousness is a property incommunicable to mere heat or to color. In heat is a property incommunicable to mere color or to luminousness. These three —luminousness, color, heat—are, however, one solar radiance. Heat subsists in the solar radiance; and color subsists in the solar radiance; and light subsists in the solar radiance. The three are one; but they are not one in the same sense in which they are three.

It is one of the inexcusable mistakes of a silly kind of skepticism, which no one here holds, that there are in the Trinity three persons, in the literal or colloquial sense of that word. Sometimes with tears and sometimes with laughter, one pauses over this astounding passage, printed in his manhood by Thomas Paine, in his "Age of Reason"; and yet what he heard read was, I presume, an atrociously careless orthodox discussion:

"I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the death of the Son of God.* After the sermon was ended I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man that killed his son when he could not revenge himself any other way; and, as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner at this moment. . . . . The Christian mythology has five deities: there is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature. But the Christian story of God the Father putting his Son to death, or employing people to do it (for that is the plain language of the story), cannot be told by a parent to

a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better is making the story still worse, as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder."—*Age of Reason*, Part I.

There is nothing in Paine's "Age of Reason" worth glancing at now except this curious paragraph in which he details the circumstances of the life-long, unconscious obtuseness and ignorance out of which arose his opposition to Christianity. Possibly, if he had understood the distinction between the Trinity in God's nature and tritheism, this sharp and crackling pamphleteer for freedom, in spite of his narrow brow and coarse fibre, would not have fallen into this amazing error, which, according to his own account, underlay all his subsequent career as an infidel. Three separate beings, he thought, Christianity teaches us to believe exist in one God; and one enraged person of these three had murdered another person.

But scholars, as a mass, following St. Augustine, centuries before poor Paine's day, copiously affirmed that the word "person" in the discussion of the Trinity does not mean what it does in colloquial speech. The word in its technical use is 1,500 years old, and it means in that use now what it meant at first.

How commonplace is St. Augustine's remark, repeated by Calvin, that this term was adopted because of the poverty of the Latin tongue! Everybody of authority tells us, if you care for scholarly statement, that three *persons* never meant, in the standard discussions of this truth, three *personalities*, for these would be three gods. This Latin term *persons* is incalculably misleading in popular use on this theme. For one, I never employ it, although willing to use it if it is understood as it was by those who invented the term. Let us use Archbishop Whateley's word "subsistence," for that is the equivalent of the carefully-chosen, sharply-cut Greek term "hypostasis."—(Note to Whateley's "Treatise on Logic.") We had better say there are in one substance three subsistences, and not mislead our generation, with its heads in newspapers and ledgers, by using a phrase that was meant to be current only among scholars. All these scholars will tell you that it is no evasion of the difficulties of this theme for me to throw out of this discussion at once the word "persons," as misleading; for that word had originally no such meaning in the Latin tongue as the word *person* has in our own. Cicero says: "*Ego unus, sustineo tres personas:* I, being one, sustain three characters—my own, that of my client, and that of the judge." Our English language at this point is, as the Latin was not, rich enough to match the old Greek. With Liddon's "Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord"—the best English book on this theme, though not exhaustive of it—let us say "One substance and three subsistences," and thus go back to the Greek phrase and be clear.

Can the four propositions of the definition I have given be paralleled by an illustration?

1. Sunlight, the rainbow, and the heat of sunlight are one solar radiance.

2. Each has a peculiarity incommunicable to the others.

3. Neither is full solar radiance without the others.

4. Each with the others is such solar radiance.

Sunlight, rainbow, heat—one solar radiance. Father, Son, Holy Ghost—one God.

1. As the rainbow shows what light is when unfolded, so Christ reveals the nature of God.

2. As all of the rainbow is sunlight, so all of Christ's divine soul is God.

3. As the rainbow was when the light was, or from eternity, so Christ was when the Father was, or from eternity.

4. As the bow may be on the earth and the sun in the sky, and yet the solar radiance remain undivided, so God may remain in heaven and appear on earth as Christ, and his oneness not be divided.

5. As the perishable raindrop is used in the revelation of the rainbow, so was Christ's body in the revelation to men of God in Christ.

6. As at the same instant the sunlight is itself and also the rainbow and heat, so at the same moment Christ is both Himself and the Father, and both the Father and the Holy Ghost.

7. As solar heat has a property incommunicable to solar color, and solar color a property incommunicable to solar light, and solar light a property incommunicable to either solar color or solar heat, so each of the three, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, has a property incommunicable to either of the others.

8. But as solar light, heat, and color are one solar radiance, so the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God.

9. As neither solar heat, light, nor color is itself without the aid of the others, so neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost is God without the others.

10. As solar heat, light and color are each solar radiance, so the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are each God.

11. As the solar rainbow fades from sight and its light continues to exist, so Christ ceases to be manifest and yet is present.

12. As the rainbow issues from sunlight and returns to the general bosom of the radiance of the sky, so Christ comes from the Father, appears for a while and returns, and yet is not absent from the earth.

13. As the influence of the heat is that of the light of the sun, so are the operations of the Holy Spirit Christ's continued life.

14. As is the relation of all vegetable growths to solar light and heat, so is the relation of all religious growths in general history, in the church and in the individual, to the Holy Spirit a present Christ.

It was my fortune once, on an October Sabbath evening, to stand alone at the grave of Wordsworth, in green Grassmere, in the English lake district, and read there the "Ode on Immortality," which your Emerson calls the highest water-mark of modern poetry and philosophy. While my eyes were fastened on the page, the sun was setting behind the gnarled, inaccessible English cliffs, not far away to the west, and a colossal rainbow was spread over the azure of the sky and the glowing purple and brown of the heathered hills in the east. A light rain fell on me, and, with my own tears, wet the pages of the poet. What now, if some one, as I worshiped there, had come to me, in a holy of holies in my life, and had said roughly, in Thomas Paine's way: "You believe in five Gods. You are not scientific"? Or what if some one had said, in Parker's way: "The perfection of God has never been accepted by any sect in the Christian world. In the ecclesiastic conception of deity there is a fourth person, the devil, as much a part of deity as either Son or Holy Ghost"?—*Weiss's Life of Parker*, Vol. II, p. 470.

"Vicarious atonement teaches salvation without morality only by belief in absurd teaching."—*Ibid*, p. 497.

"According to the popular theology, there are three acknowledged persons in the Godhead. God the Father is made to appear remarkable for three things—great power, great selfishness and great destructiveness. The Father is the grimmest object in the universe."—("Sermons on Theism," p. 101.) "He, the Draco of the universe—more cruel than Odin or Baal—the author of sin, but its unforgiving avenger. Men rush from the Father; they flee to the Son." "The popular theology makes Jesus a God, and does not tell us of God now near at hand. Science must lay his kingly head in the dust; Reason veil her majestic countenance; Conscience bow him to the earth; Affection keep silence, when the priest uplifts the Bible."—*Discourses on Religion*, pp. 425–427.)

How would all that speech of the Parkers and the Paines have jarred upon my soul if, standing there alone in a strange land and at the grave of Wordsworth, I had heard the profane collision of their accusations with the holy sentences of this seer, fed from the cradle to the tomb upon Christian truth! What, if at Wordsworth's grave, disturbed by such ghoulish attack, I had needed a spell to disperse the accusations—what better *Procul, procul, este profani* could I have chosen than these words, once uttered in this city by a renowned teacher of this accused theology—a man of whom it might be said, as he once said of Jonathan Edwards that he might have been the first poet of his nation if he had not chosen to be its first theologian?

A majestic discourse delivered at the installation of the revered pastor of the Old South Church yonder says: "Other men may be alone; but the Christian, wherever he moves, is near to his Master. Every effect is the result of some free will. But many effects within and without us are not produced by a created will. Therefore, they are produced by an uncreated. On the deep sea, under the venerable oak, in the pure air of the mountain-top, the Christian communes with the Father of Spirits, who is the Saviour of men. All ethical axioms, are His revelation of Himself to His children. Their innocent joys are His words of good cheer. Their deserved sorrows are His loud rebukes."

In these words of Professor Park, a benighted believer in three Gods, as you say, is God afar off? Are there three Gods here? Does Science bow her head, Affection grow dumb, Reason muffle her face, as this priest lifts up the Bible?

As the rainbow shows the inner structure of the light, so the character of our Lord shows the inner moral nature of God, so far as that can be known to man. A rainbow is unraveled light; is it not? It was assuredly better for me at Wordsworth's grave to look on the bow I saw in the east, than to gaze on the white radiance that fell on the poet's page when I wished to behold the fullest glory of the light. So assuredly it is better for us to gaze on God's character as revealed in Christ than on God's character as revealed in his works merely, if we would understand God's nature. As the rainbow is unraveled light, so Christ is unraveled God. At Wordsworth's grave I heard these hoarse voices from the Paines and the Parkers, and these softer and I think more penetratingly human ones from the Wordsworths and the Parks, and, in the name of the scientific method, it was impossible not to assert in my soul that the God who was revealed in Christ was and is, and is to come; for there is but one God, and He was and is, and is to come. Therefore, when the bow faded from the east, I did not think that it had ceased to be. It had not been annihilated; it had been revealed for awhile; and, disappearing, it was received back into the bosom of the general radiance, and yet continued to fall upon the earth. In every beam of white light there is potentially all the color which we find unraveled in the rainbow; and so in all the pulsations in the will of God the Father in his works exist the pulsations of the heart of Him who wept over Jerusalem, and on whose bosom once the beloved disciple leaned; for there is but one God, who was, and is, and is to come; and on that same bosom we bow our heads whenever we bow our foreheads upon that Sinai within us which we call the moral law. The Holy Spirit to me is Christ's continued life.

But you say, my friends, that this may be philosophical; but that it is not biblical truth. You affirm that I teach my-

self this by science, rather than by Scripture. Gentlemen, under the noon of New England philosophical and biblical culture, and in presence I know not of how many who dissent, I ask you to decide for yourselves what the Scriptures really teach as to the unity of the three subsistences in that Divine Nature which was, and is, and is to come. Assuredly, you will be ready, in the name of literary science, to cast at least one searching glance upon this whole theme from the point of view of exclusively biblical statement.

"It is expedient for you that I go away. I have yet many things to say unto you. I will not leave you orphans. I am coming to you. A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." They who heard these sentences said: "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, and because I go to the Father? What is this that he saith? We cannot tell what he saith." But there came a later day, when he who had made that promise breathed upon them, and said: "Receive ye the gift of the Holy Ghost." We shall not be here. All of us will be mute, and most of us forgotten, when in a better age the meaning of that symbolic act of the Author of Chistianity is fathomed.

Next there came a day when there was a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, and this filled all the house where they who had witnessed that act were sitting. This is but the experience of many nations since then—the rushing sound of a new influence in human history, quickening human consciences, transforming bad lives into good; but until that time never felt in the world in deluges, although it had appeared in streams. When that influence came, what was the interpretation put upon it by the scriptural writers? Peter, standing up, said: "We heard from Him, whom we know that God has raised from the dead, the promise of the Holy Ghost. He hath shed forth this; therefore, let Jerusalem know assuredly that God hath made him Lord." I call that Peter's colossal "therefore." It is the strongest word in the first oration delivered in the defense of Christianity. The Holy Spirit was promised; it has been poured out; therefore, let those who receive it know that the power behind natural law—our Lord, who was, and is, and is to come—is now breathing upon the centuries as he breathed upon us symbolically. He hath shed forth this; therefore, let all men know assuredly that God hath made him Lord. When they who were assembled in Jerusalem at that time heard this "*therefore*," they were pricked in the heart.

I affirm that it is incontrovertible that the New Testament writers everywhere, with Stephen, gaze steadfastly into Heaven and behold our Lord—not in Galilee, not on the Mount of

Olives, but at the right hand of the Father. Our imagination always looks eastward through England, as through the east window of a cathedral; and so we look out through vapor sometimes, through literalness, or through materialistic haze, thicker than vapor occasionally, and we have not strength of imagination or fervor of spirit enough to understand this literature of the East, on the face of which the world has gazed 1800 years, and seen its face to be like that of Stephen, as the face of an angel, and from the same cause. The whole New Testament, being full of the Holy Ghost, gazes, not as England and America do, into Gethsemane, or upon any sacred mount, but into Heaven, and beholds our Lord at the right hand of the Father. I have bowed down upon the Mount of Olives; I have had unreportable experiences in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the banks of Jordan, and on the white, sounding shore of Galilee, and on Lebanon, and on Carmel, and on Tabor, and God forbid that I should underrate at all a religion that reverences sacred places; but of these sacred places, the New Testament proclaims, "He is not here. He has arisen and is ascended." It nowhere exhibits our narrowness of outlook.

What, if under the dome of St. Peter's there were but four windows? What if children were brought up to look out yonder upon the Apennines, and here upon the Mediterranean, and there upon the Coliseum, and here upon St. Onofrio's oak, under which Tasso sung. If children were brought up before these windows, and did not pass from one to the other, they might possibly think the outlook from each one was Italy. And so it is; but it is only a part of Italy. We are poor children, brought up, some of us, before the window of science, some of us before the window of art, some of us before the window of politics, some of us before the window of Biblical inculcation, and we say in petulant tones to each other, each at his accustomed outlook: "This is Italy." What is Italy? Sweep off the dome and answer: "There is but one sky." And that and all beneath it is Italy!

As a fact in literature, it must be affirmed that this is the central thought of the New Testament Scriptures.

We find that when one called Saul of Tarsus journeyed to Damascus (this is trite, because 1,800 years have heard it, and the trite is the important thing in history), he heard from a light above the brightness of this noon the words, "I am Jesus!" And so, later on, Paul wrote, that "we, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." "The Spirit is the Lord" was St. Augustine's reading of Paul's words.

So, in the last pages of Revelation I find that he who was the beloved disciple was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and

that he beheld one whose voice was like unto the sound of many waters, and whose countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. "When I saw Him," says this great poet and prophet and apostle, "I, who have been called a Son of Thunder; I, who, when Cerinthus was in the same bath with me, cried out, Away, thou heretic! I, who have been ready at any time to suffer martyrdom—I fell at his feet as dead. He laid His right hand on me, saying unto me: 'Fear not. I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.'"

It is significant beyond comment that our Lord was often called "The Spirit," and "The Spirit of God," by the earlier Christian writers. "The Son is the Holy Spirit" is a common expression. Ignatius said: "Christ is the Immaculate Spirit."—(*Ad Smyrn. init.*) Tertullian wrote: "The Spirit of God and the Reason of God—Word of Reason and Reason and Spirit of Word—Jesus Christ our Lord, who is both the one and the other."—(*De. Orat. init.*) Cyprian and Irenæus said: "He is the Holy Spirit."—(See Delitzsch's *System of Bib. Psychology.*

Neander, in paraphrase of Peter's oration, says, in summarizing the New Testament literature: "From the extraordinary appearances which have filled you with astonishment you perceive that in His glorified state He is now operating with divine energy among those who believe in Him. The Heavenly Father has promised that the Messiah shall fill all who believe on Him with the power of the Divine Spirit, and this promise is now being fulfilled. Learn, then, from these events, in which you behold the prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled, the nothingness of all that you have attempted against Him; and know that God has exalted Him whom you crucified to be Messiah, the ruler of God's kingdom, and that, through divine power, He will overawe all his enemies."—(Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, Bohn's ed., i, 19. Summary of Peter's speech in Acts ii.)

So Alford writes: "Christ is the Spirit, is identical with the Holy Spirit; not personally nor essentially, but (as is shown by the Spirit of the Lord following) in this department of His divine working. Christ, here, is the Spirit ofChrist."—("Remarks on 2 Cor. iii, 17.")

Lange, writing on the same passage of this literature, adds: "We find here such an identification of Christ and the Holy Spirit that the Lord to whom the heart turns is in no practical respect different from the Holy Spirit received in conversion. Christ is virtually the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is His Spirit."—(Lange, 2 Cor. iii, 17, 18.)

What if Peter, at Antioch, had beheld the earliest triumphs of Christianity under persecution, and had heard the story of

the martyrdoms which became the seed of the Church, and caused Christians to be called by that name, and that shot through with hope the unspeakable despair of Roman paganism, as by the first rays of the dawn—could he not, looking on Lebanon and Tabor, on Jerusalem and Galilee, have said: "He hath shed forth this advance of Christianity in human affairs. God has a plan, and he thus reveals it. God is giving triumph to Christianity; therefore, let Lebanon and Tabor, let Jerusalem and Galilee, know assuredly that God hath made our Lord the Lord of the Roman earth, indeed, and that the influence of the Holy Ghost is Christ's continued life."

What, if later, when Christianity had ascended to the throne of the Cæsars, Peter had stood on the Tiber, and had beheld philosophy, little by little, permeated by Christianity? What if he had looked back on the persecutions and martyrdoms which gave purity and power to early Christianity, and which make her record, even to your infidel Gibbon, venerable beyond comment? Could not Peter, there on the Tiber, have said, looking on the Apennines, and Vesuvius, and the Mediterranean, and on Egypt: "Let Rome and the Tiber, let Alexandria and the Nile, know assuredly, since our Lord who was and is and is to come, hath shed forth this, that He is Lord."

What if, later, Peter, standing on the Bosphorus, when Rome had lost her footing on the Tiber, had beheld the rushing in of the Turks to pulverize the sunrise foot of old Rome; what if he had remembered the day when, standing on two feet, Rome, planting herself on both the Tiber and the Bosphorus, folded her arms and looked at the North star, and proclaimed herself likely to be as eternal as that stellar light; what if, remembering all that had come and all that had gone, he had beheld that colossus topple toward the west, smite itself into pieces on the Alps, and fall in fragments on the Rhine, on the Elbe, on the Oder, some pieces scattered across the howling North Sea to the Thames, and to the sites of Oxford and Cambridge—these fragments of old Rome built up in these places into universities which caused at last the illumination which brought the Reformation; what if Peter, beholding thus the Greeks driven toward the sunset, and old Rome becoming seed for the Reformation, had stood on the Seine, on the Elbe, on the Oder, and had witnessed the varied progress of the ideas of Him who affirmed once that he had many things yet to say, might not Peter there, side by side with Luther, have said once more: "He hath shed forth this· therefore, let the Alps and the Rhine and the Seine and the Elbe, the Thames and the German Sea, know assuredly that this gulf-current in human history, now 2,000 years old, is not an accident—that it means all it expresses, for what God does He from the first intends to do. He who has thus watched over the cause of Christian truth,

and has been breathing the Holy Ghost upon the nations, hath shed forth this; and therefore, let Berlin and Paris and London and Oxford and Cambridge know assuredly that God hath made him Lord."

What if, later, when the tempest of persecution, rising out of the sunrise, smote upon those universities and blew the "Mayflower" across the sea, Peter had taken position in that vessel, as its billowing, bellying, bellowing sails fled across the great deep in the icy breath of that time; and what if he had seen on the deck of that "Mayflower" a few rushlights taking their gleam from those universities, themselves illuminated by the fire that fell at Pentecost? What if Peter, afterward, standing on Plymouth Rock, had seen these rushlights kindling others, and a line of rushlights, representing the same illumination of the Holy Spirit, go out into our wilderness, until they glass themselves in the Connecticut, and in the Hudson, and in the eyes of the wild beasts of the murmuring pines and hemlocks, and in the eternal roar of Niagara, and in the Great Lakes, and in the Mississippi, and in the springs of the Sierras, and at last in the soft, hissing foam of the Pacific seas. What if, beholding these rushlights, thus carried across a continent by Divine guidance, Peter had stood here, would not the force of his word "therefore" have had new emphasis, as he should have said: "He hath shed forth this; therefore let Boston, let New York, let Chicago, let San Francisco, let the surf of the Bay of Fundy, let the waterfalls of the Yosemite know assuredly that God hath made Him Lord."

But what if, when a tempest sprung out of the south, and these rushlights were, I will not say extinguished, but all bent to the earth and painfully tried, some of them blown out, he had beheld the lights, little by little, after the tempest had gone down, begin to be carried southward, and at last glass themselves in the streaming bayous and the gulf; what if, although some had been extinguished forever, he had seen them shining on the breaking of the fetters of 3,000,000 slaves; what if the churches, when the tempest ceased, grow brighter in their assertion of the value of their light, and are filling the land with its influence, and, if God continues to illumine them, will make the rushlights glass themselves yet in all the streams, in all the springs, and in all the sprays on all the shores of all the land, could not he, looking on such results, in a territory greater than Rome ever ruled over, have said: "He hath shed forth this; therefore, let America know assuredly that God hath made Him Lord."

But what if, lastly, Peter had beheld a rushlight taken across the Pacific to the Sandwich Islands, and one to Japan, and one to China, and one to India, and had seen the soft-rolling globe enswathed in all its zones by rushlights, bearing the very flames

which fell at Pentecost; and beaten on, indeed, by persecution here and there, but not likely to be beaten on ever again as fiercely as they have been already; not likely to be blown out everywhere, even if they are in some places; and thus enspher-ing the globe, so that it is not probable at all, under the law of the survival of the fittest, that they will be put out; could not Peter, then, looking on what God had done, and what He, therefore, intended to do, looking on the in-controvertible fact that the islands of the sea and the continents have been coming to prefer Christian thought, and seem likely to remain under its influence; could not he, while standing on scientific and biblical ground, at once have affirmed, in the name both of science and of Scripture, the transfiguring truth: "He hath shed forth this; therefore, let Asia on the Himalaya tops, let Europe in the Parthenon and Coliseum, let London's mystic roar, let the New World in her youthful vigor, let all the islands of the sea know assuredly that the fittest has survived, and that the fittest will survive, and that God hath made him Lord who is fittest to be so." All the seas, in all their waves, on all their shores would answer to such an assertion: Hallelujah! So be it! The influences of the Holy Spirit are Christ's continued life.